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THE SAINTS COMFORTS.

Being the ſubſtance of diverſe Sermons Preached on, *Pſal.* 130. the beginning.

The *Saints Happineſſe*, on *Pſal.* 73. 28.

The *Rich Pearle*; on *Math.* 13. 45, 46.

The *Succeſſe* of the *Goſpell*, on, *Luk.* 7. 34, 35.

Maries Choyce, on *Luk.* 10. 38. 39, 40.

By *Richard Sibbes*, D. D. now deceaſed.

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FINIS.

AN EXPOSITION VPON The Cxxx Pſalme.

VER. 1.

Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee, O God.

THis *Pſalme* is a pithy *Pſalme*, and therefore is called a *Pſalme* of degrees. Other reaſons the *Iewes* give of this title, but they agree not: ſome will have it, that theſe *Pſalmes*

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were ſung upon the fifteene ſtaires that went up to the Temple: ſome call them thus, for that they ſay they were ſung with an extraordinary high voyce. But in theſe difficulties, *Melius eſt dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis.* All hiſtoricall truths are not neceſſary to be knowne; for Chriſt did many things that were not written. *Ioh.* 20.30.

The Author is not named, how ever we may aſſure our ſelves the Spirit of God indited it: ſeting downe, Firſt the ſtate of the writer, *verſ.* 1. Secondly, his carriage in that eſtate, *Hee prayed being in depthes*, *verſ.* 2. Thirdly, the ground of his prayer, which was Gods

Gods mercy, *vers.*3. His owne faith, hope and patience, his waiting is simply layd downe, *vers.*5. and comparatively, *ver.*6. And fourthly, an application to the whole Church, *vers.*7. from his owne experience of Gods mercy and sufficiency.

Out of the first part concerning the state of the writer of this *Psalme*, let us observe these particulars following in their order. First, *That the children of God doe fall into depthes*, that is into extremity of misery and affliction, which are called depthes, because as waters and depthes, so these doe swallow up and drowne the soule, and because they

Children of God fall into extremity of misery and affliction.

doe compaſſe about the ſoule burying it in great, terrible, continuing deepe dangers: and theſe depths of a Chriſtian are either outward or inward, *the outward troubles* and depths are theſe of the body: theſe are Gods children afflicted with as *Ionas* was when he was in the bottome of the Sea: *Ioſeph* in priſon, and *Paul* in the dungeon, and theſe are like the man of God to the Shunamite, 1 *King.* 17. 18. they doe but call our ſinnes to remembrance: *But the inward ſpirituall* troubles are the great depths, that is trouble of minde, for ſinne that lies upon us, cauſing us to doubt of our eſtate to feele

feele Gods wrath, to feare rejection and excluding from Gods presence, this is the soule of sorrow, other outward sorrowes being but the carcasse of sorrow. The spirit of a man will beare his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can beare: In such an estate in regard of the extremitie of the burthen of the sinnes of the whole world layd on him, was our head Christ Iesus; making him sweate drops of blood, and when he was on the crosse, when he cryed with strong cries and teares, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken mee: *But why is this thus*, that the point of our salvation should be in such

a depth of misery: I answer because it was requisite that salvation should be repaired by the contrary meanes to that whereby it was lost. It was lost by lifting up. *Adam* would be like a God, and Christ hee regained us by abasing himselfe, the Sonne of God must become man, and a man of sorrowes, and as the head was, so the members have beene and must be, *Rom.* 8. 29. for wee are predestinated to be like the Image of his Sonne: and so to pledge him in the same cup wherein hee dranke deepe to us: in this plight wee finde *David* often, though a man after Gods owne heart, *Psal.* 6. 2, 3.

Psal.

Psal. 88.2.&c. *Psal.* 40.12. and *Ionah* a Prophet: *Ionah* 2.2,&c. and *Hezekiah*, *Esa.* 38.13. and *Iob* specially, *Iob.* 6.4 *But why is this thus*, seeing our head Christ Iesus hath suffered for us? I answer, wee must suffer; First, *that we may know what Christ suffered for us by our owne experience*, without which we should but lightly esteeme of our redemption, not knowing how to vallew Christs sufferings sufficiently, which is a horrible sinne, *Heb.* 2. 3. Secondly, *by our sufferings we know what a bitter thing sinne is*, *Ier.* 2.19. as by the ill consequents thereof, for without the taste of Gods wrath we finde nothing but

1. *Reason.*

2. *Reason.*

Sibbes, 1.

sweetnesse and pleasure in sinne: and therefore wee have so much sense of Gods wrath as to humble us, but shewes not the extremitie of the depth of sinne, lest wee should sinke downe into despaire.

3. *Reason.* Thirdly, *by our afflictions and depths we manifest Gods power and glory,* the more in our deliverance, for the greater the trouble is, the greater is the deliverance, as the greater the cure is, the greater credit the Phisition gets.

4. *Reason.* Fourthly, *many times by lesse evills its Gods manner to cure greater,* and thus he suffers us to feele wrath to cure us of security, which is as a grave to the soule; as also to cure spi-

spirituall pride that robs us of grace, dealing with us as hee did with the Israelites, he would not cast out all the nations from before them, but left some that might be imployed in hunting and destroying the wilde beasts which might else multiply against the children of *Israel*; and thus God dealt with *Paul*, gave him to be vexed by a base temptation lest he should be lifted up with spirituall pride through the abundance of revelations. Fiftly, *these depths are left to us, to make us more desirous of heaven*; Else great men that are compassed about with earthly comforts, alasse with what zeale could they

5. *Reason.*

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pray; *Thy kingdome come &c.* No, with *Peter* they would rather say *Master its good for us to be heere*: and therefore it is Gods usuall dealing with great men to suffer them to fall into spirituall disertions to smoake them out of the world whether they will or not.

6. *Reason.* Sixthly, *God workes by these afflictions in us a more gentlenesse of Spirit, making us meeke and pittifull towards those that are in depthes*, which was one cause of Christs afflictions: he suffered that hee might helpe and comfort others, he suffered *Peter* to stumble that when he was converted hee should strengthen his brethren.

Hencë

Hence therefore wee *learne, not to passe a rash censure on our selves or others, that are in such depthes,* as this holy man was in; for the afflicted soule, no sooner tastes of this bitter fruite but presently breakes out into complaints; Never was any thus afflicted as I, thinking it unpossible that there should be greater crosses than it feeles; when indeed the draught that Christ our head did drinke to us was farre beyond the apprehension of mortall man, and therefore much more beyond his power to undergoe: *let us beware how we censure others that are afflicted;* for Gods ends are hid: it may be

1. *Use.* Not rashly to censure our selves or others.

Sibbes, v.

be God ſends afflictions to manifeſt ſome excellent graces which lye in him, unknowne both to the world and himſelfe; and ſo he ſet *Iob* as a flagge of defiance againſt the Devill, biding him doe his worſt he ſhould finde him upright and a juſt man, and therefore we ſhould rather take notice of affliction, as a ſigne of ſome excellent grace with which God hath furniſhed ſuch; for God will not call out any of his to ſuffering, but hee will get himſelfe honour thereby.

2. *Uſe.* Againſt prophane mockers at the dejected.

In the 2 *place note this doctrine againſt the prophane perſons that tuſh* at religion, and make a mocke at the deje-

dejected condition of those that are good: because they seeme despised, afflicted and forsaken, they alasse are ignorant of Gods wayes and workes; it were much safer for them to consider their owne wayes, and to reason, if God deales thus with his deareſt ones, with the greene trees, what shall become of those that are his enemies that are dry trees: if such troubles arise to the godly even from Gods love to them: what shall defend the wicked when the voyalls of Gods wrath shall be powred downe upon them, when they shall call to the rockes and mountaines to hide, cover, and defend them:

If

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If the righteous hardly be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly appeare; and to conclude know that the afflictions of the children of God, are farre better than the pleaſures of ſinne.

2. *Doct.* God upholdeth his Children from ſinking in trouble.

In the ſecond place obſerve we, though Chriſtians fall into depthes, *yet God upholds them that they ſinke not downe into them without recovery.* Thus it was with our head, though hee on the ſuddaine apprehended not the preſence of God, ſo as he thought himſelfe forſaken, yet he could even at the worſt ſay, *My God*: thus alſo *Ionah* 2. 3. *I ſayd I was caſt out of thy ſight, yet will I looke towards thy holy Temple.*

ple. So *Pſal.* 31. 22. and *Pſal.* 118. 5. and 6. *verſes.* *For the ſpirit of God is in them:* and where it is, it is ſtronger than hell; yea though the grace be but as a graine of muſtard ſeede: againe as there are depthes of miſery in a Chriſtian: *So in God there are depths of love and of wiſedome.* 1. *Reaſon.* 2. *Reaſon.*

Thirdly, *faith where it is unites the ſoule to Chriſt, & to God through him;* and draws downe divine power to lay hold on to almighty power of God by true and fervent prayer, at whoſe rebuke the waters of affliction flee away; *Pſal.* 77. 16. and ſo the ſtronger the faith is, the ſtronger is the delivery, for it is of a migh- 3. *Reaſon.*

ty

ty power, inabling us to wraſtle with God as *Iacob* did: thus when wee lay hold on God and God on us, what can drowne us.

4 *Reaſon.* Fourthly, *it is the nature of Gods working to bee by Contraries*; in his workes of Creation, making all things of nothing, in his workes of providence he ſaves by little meanes from greateſt dangers; that hee might bring us to heaven, he ſuffers us to goe downe even into hell: to ſee our worſt eſtate to humble us and it may therefore bee a cauſe why many men lye long in afflictions, even becauſe they come not low enough to ſee their ſinnes and need of helpe; In glorifying our mortall

mortall bodies hee first brings them to the grave that they may rotte and corrupt and so be refined and moulded a new.

This should teach us a note of difference betweene those that are Gods children, and those that are not; those that are his when they are in danger goe to him, they have ever that hold by faith, as to say yet God is good to *Israel*; others seeke to escape by desperate undoing of themselves, as *Saul*, and *Iudas*, and *Achitophel* for all his strong naturall parts; and indeed such are in most danger of such courses of all other, for God will tread on such for their pride con- 1. *Use.*

Sibbes, 1.

contrarily he mingles comforts (in the worſt eſtate that his children are in) with greefes, one to humble them, the other to ſupport them from deſpaire, and ſo hee ſets them on a rocke that is higher then they.

2. *Vſe.* Secondly, *it ſhould teach us in all extremities how to carry our ſelves*; we ſhould take heed of the ſtreame of greefe ſtriving againſt it, as wee deſire a note of our good eſtate, take heed how wee thinke that God forſakes us; it is an imputation unbefitting him that never forſakes his; take heede of judging our ſelves by ſence. Is meate ſoure becauſe one that is ſicke doth

doth not reliſh it? no, the fault is in his indiſpoſition, ſo in ſuch diſertions be ſure thou retaineſt thy anchor of hope, though contrary to hope, and therefore *in the next place we ſhould anſwer Gods dealing by our dealing*: he workes by contraries, wee ſhould judge by contraries: therefore if we bee in miſery hope and waite for glory; in death looke for life, in ſence of ſinne aſſure thy ſelfe of pardon: for Gods nature and promiſe are unchangeable, and when God will forgive he lets us ſee our troubles; and therefore with reſolute *Iob* ſay though he kills me I will yet truſt in him: But to come particularly I will

3. *Uſe.*

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will set downe cures of such depths as may arise from severall causes and these depths are either imaginary or reall: Christians sometimes thinke themselves to be in depths when indeed they are not, but it is onely imaginary, *raised it may be from a melancholy distemperature* of the spirits, which also distempers the reasonable working of the minde, raising as false and fained conceipts of their soules as it doth in many of their bodies, and yet these conceipts have reall effects; as in *Iacob* who sorrowed as truly for *Ioseph* as if hee were dead indeed, therefore for the avoyding here of

of *be not alone, a friend* and good company are made for such times, for the Divell sets on men in such case most when they are alone, and the strongest are then too weake for him: and beleeve not thine owne fancie but rather beleeve those that can diserne us better then we our selves, can wee know how men have beene deceived thus, and therefore when wee are advised thus by friends and councelled, let us suspect that it is a motion of the Divell or a fancie of thine owne that thus troubles thee. There is another depth that is imaginary *arising from mistaking of rules*; concluding because they

Cure.

Mor.

Sibbes, 4.

they have not so much grace as others, have not so much subduing and prevailing power over sinne: therefore they have no grace at all, they are damned hypocrites & the like;

Cure.

little do they thinke that perfection is not attaineable here, but is reserved to the blessednesse of that other life hereafter; little doe they looke to the imperfections of the best Saints of God and the great depths that they have been in, and indeede they know not what the covenant of grace requires, not perfect fulfilling of the Law by our owne persons, for that was the end of the Law; but the covenant of grace re-

requires ſynceritie with grouth, and this is the onely perfection which wee can looke for here. Another depth alſo there is, *which ariſeth from the taking of the motions of the devill, for theſe of his owne corrupt nature*, the baſeneſſe and unreaſonableneſſe of them makes them thinke they cannot be Gods children: and have ſuch deteſtable motions within them: *Let ſuch know that ſuch ſhall be caſt upon Sathans ſcore*: And its a ſigne rather that ſuch are none of the children of the devill: who if they were, would ſuffer them to reſt in quiet without vexing them. Againe ſome men fall into another depth, *which*

Mor.

Cure.

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Cure.

which ariseth from an apprehension of God forsaking them. To such I give this advice, that they *judge not of themselves by their distemper*, for a sinfull conscience puts a vaile sometimes betweene God and us, hiding his favour, which nevertheless may bee as great to us than, as at any other time and, it may bee intended by God, to drive us to him by scourging us from our wicked wayes and sinnes, which formerly we lived in: *By faith therefore pull off the vizard from the face of God*, judge not according to present appearance but by God nature and his promises, who hath sayd he will be with

with us for ever that no temptations ſhall be above meaſure, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. judge by his nature who is unchangeable; and thus did the Cananitiſh woman, ſee Chriſts loving nature under his frowning looke, who doth as *Ioſeph* hide his love and perſon from his brethren out of a encreaſment of love, not out of any ill intent: Againe *in ſuch a caſe let us be ſure wee truſt others that are our friends rather then our ſelves*, I meane in time of temptation, when as others can better diſcerne of our health by our ſpirituall pulſes then we our ſelves who then are blinded, and in ſuch caſes theres the

3.

triall of Faith and love.

Mor. There is another sort of depths, *and these are before conversion*, and thus was *Paul* troubled, Lord what shall I doe, and thus was *Manasses*;

Cure. *Let such consider the Commandement*, to humble them and cast themselves on Christ and his promises, considering the end of Christs comming was to save and seeke such as are lost:

4. Use. *And if any one shall finde himselfe already escaped such depths as are formerly mentioned, let him take comfort to himselfe*, as being thereby evidently proved to be the child of God, for that it is utterly impossible that nature should overcome such diffi-

difficulties, and to that end let him reaſon after this ſort, Gods children goe to him in depths, I goe onely to him in depths, therefore I am Gods child: for to have the ſpirit of prayer to goe to God in time of trouble, its a worke of the ſpirit: a naturall man hath it not, *Iob* 27. 9. 10. Hence therefore in the next place *note a ſure ſigne of the true Religion, namely to be able to ſuppo t men in da ger and in ſpirituall troubles*, this is verified in ours, as the ſub il Ieſuite will acknowledge while they hold that repoſing our ſelves meerely on mercy and favour in Chriſt and not on mans good workes is the ſafeſt

5. *Uſe.* A note of true Religion.

way, why therefore they live by their uncomfortable rules & when they die flie for succour to these which in their life time they despise: moreover let this be a *ground to encourage us never to give over Gods cause*; He hath sayd he will not leave us though we be in depth of our sinnes if we belong to him, and therefore much lesse will hee leave us in that worke which he himselfe sets us about; he was with *Daniel* among the Lions, with *Moses* in the Bulrushes, with the three children in the fire, with his Church through fire and water. Lastly, *let us therefore bee sure to keepe God our friend*, that

6. Use. Not to give over Gods cause

7. Use. To keepe God our friend.

that hee may owne us, elſe when wee cry he will not heare us, *Prov.* 1. 28. acquaint we our ſelves with him as it is in *Iob* 22. 21. in proſperitie and he will be our refuge, &c. In the third place obſerve we that *Afflictions ſtirre up devotion*; for prayers in time of afflictions are cries, *Oratio ſine malis eſt avis ſine alis*, for what alaies worldly joy and imbitters it but Affliction, now wee know that it is the worldly Afflictions that quenches our zeale and makes us cold. Affliction is a purgation opening the ſoule cauſing it to reliſh and to affect ſpiritually, and to ſee the wants & neceſſitie of ſupply, and ſo

3. *Doct.* Affliction ſtirre up devotion.

procures longing and earneſt hungering, *Hoſea.* 5. 15. In their Affliction they will ſeeke me early, and therefore *Pſal.* 107. 6. its ſayd they cried to the Lord in their trouble, now crying ſuppoſes want and ſence of miſery and ardency: Thus were Chriſts cries called ſtrong cryes; and indeede weake afflictions many times makes men rather pettiſh and froward, as *Ionas* then ardent in feeling releefe, and therefore *let us interpret Gods dealings with a ſanctified judgement*; he is a wiſe Phiſition, & knowes when ſtrong or gentle Phiſicke is moſt requiſite; ſometimes God by great Afflictions doth manifeſt great

1. *Vſe.* To interpret Gods dealings with a ſanctified judgment.

great graces, but ſo as notwithſtanding they may be mingled with a deale of corruption and its Gods uſe that hereby his graces may be increaſed, and the corruption alayed to bring downe the greateſt Cedars, and to ecclipſe the greateſt lights. Secondly *let us oppoſe deſperations by all meanes, by prayer, by crying*, and if we cannot ſpeak, by ſighing, if not ſo yet by geſture, eſpecially at the time of death, for God knowes the heart, for then it ſtands upon eternall comfort, and therefore let us doe any thing to ſhew our faith failes not; we muſt know that every one ſhall meete with theſe ene-

2. *Uſe.* To oppoſe deſpaire by prayer.

mies that would cauſe us to deſpaire if they could, for this life is a warring and ſtriving life, wee ſhall have enemies without and within us that will fight againſt us.

4. *Doct.* Prayers are to be made onely to God.

In the next place obſerve by the example of this holy man, that Prayers are to bee made onely to God, who knowes our wants, ſupports us and binds us up; and it is onely Chriſt that doth this, none can love us more then he that gave himſelfe for us; he is our eye wherby we ſee, our mouth whereby we ſpeake, our armes whereby we lay hold on God: and therefore its an intollerable unthankefulneſſe to leave this foun-

fountaine opened for sinnē and for uncleanneſſe, and to dig to our ſelves Ciſternes that will hold no water; to leave Chriſt and runne to Saints and Angels and the like, &c.

VERS. II.

Lord heare my voyce, let thine eares be attentive to the voyce of my ſupplications.

MArke here his conſtancy and inſtancy in Prayer by his ingemination; and this he doth not to worke upon God, as if he were hard to be intreated to mercie, but to waken

ken up his owne heart and to intreate of God a more inward and cleare communion, communicating increaſe of grace, ſo as Gods children are not ſatisfied with ſmall portions of grace. And this did *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9.18,19. O Lord heare, forgive, harken, doe, deferre not: his ardency ſhewes into what an exigent hee was brought, and indeede the Lord regards lukewarme prayers no more then lukewarme perſons, ſo as hee will ſpue them out; Prayer muſt be like incenſe, it muſt be fired with zeale. But ſome will aske, how ſhall wee come to make our Prayers fervent? I anſwer, conſider

Queſtion. How to make prayer fervent.

Anſwer.

der of our wants, and our neceſſitie of ſupply of our miſery in our want, of our hope to prevaile by prayer, and theſe will edge our affections in prayer. Conſider alſo how theſe times & the eſtate of the Church doe ſimpathie with thy particular depths, the Church abroad is in great depths: and if we will have proofe that wee are fellow members that wee are children of that mother, let us labour for a fellow feeling of their miſeries and make them our owne, and to that end, *in our prayers alledge the depths and pray*, Helpe thou Lord for vaine is mans helpe; for extremitie it ſelfe is a good argument

1. Direction to ſee our wants, and to lay them open before God.

gument to a father to helpe his children: *Alledge alſo the inſolencie of the enemies*; why ſhould the heathen ſay where is our God. There is no Church but uſeth more helpes of humiliation then wee doe, which foretells a great judgement; for God cannot indure this lukewarmeneſſe, therefore call upon God with fervencie, elſe will he caſt us into ſuch extremities as ſhall force fire into us: he that is poore doth naturally ſpeake ſupplications. Secondly, *looke that we alwayes bee in ſuch an eſtate as God may heare us; if we be not within the covenant with God* our prayers ſhall turne to ſinne. Third-

2. *Direction.* See we bee in Covenant.

ly

ly, *take heede of wilfull neglect of Gods word*; hee that turneth his eares from hearing the Law, his prayer shall be abominable, *Prov.* 28.9. Some cry downe preaching, & cry up praier, making opposition betweene duties where none is; dost thou thinke God will heare thee, and thou wilt not heare him, *Prov.* 1.28. Fourthly, *take heede of double dealing with God*, this is hatefull to God, and therefore *David*, till hee dealt plainely with himselfe by condemning himselfe, his prayers were but roaring as a beast taken in a snare and cannot get out; roares for paine and despight, *Psal.* 32. *Take heede in*

3. *Direction.* Take heed of neglect of the word

4. *Direction.* Take heed of doubl: dealing with God.

5. Direction, alow not of any ſinne.

in the next place of allowance of any ſinne though never ſo little, and though it be onely entertained in heart, the Lord will not heare our prayers, *Pſal.* 66. 18. for ſhall wee thinke that God cares for our prayers when we make covenant with his enemies.

6. Direction, be not cruell or unmerciful.

6. *Take heede alſo of unmercifulneſſe and crueltie*, God would not heare the *Iſraelites*: their hands were full of blood, *Eſa.* 1. 15. God will rather have no ſacrifice than no charitie. Let us take heede of theſe things, and let us come boldly to the throne of grace, while he holds out his Septer to us.

But againſt this a man may

may object and ſay, *that he is a wicked wretch*, and his prayers ſhall but increaſe ſinne.

To ſuch I anſwer, let them after their prayers in obedience to Gods Commandements, who commands them to pray, and hee will reſpect the very groanes of his ſpirit within. *Elias* was a man ſubject to the like infirmities, yet God heard his prayer, *Iam.* 5. 17. where Gods Spirit ſtirreth up, mans ſpirit is ſtirred up, and where Chriſt joynes to offer the prayers to his Father as in his owne name; why ſhould we vilifie that which God highly eſteeme h: Let God have his ſacri-

Sibbes, R.

ſacrifice, he knowes how to accept of that which is good, and to pardon that which is amiſſe, he will ſecond his beginnings and will inlarge the heart more and more; though in the beginning prayer may bee dull and untoward, it ſhall end in fulneſſe, and therefore let theſe ſpirituall d pths be ſo farre off from hindering us from prayer, as that rather it ſhould incourage us to pray: for it may be one end why the Lord ſuffers us to fall into depths: to the end that we may be ſtirred up to come to him, that thus wee may glorifie him, and he glorifie his mercy in hearing our prayers and granting our requeſts;

requeſts; for ſure it is, he that hath not a heart to pray when he is in depths ſhall never come out of them, and let ſuch as doe come to him know, that however God is not preſent to ſence, but rather ſeemeth to hide himſelfe, yet he is moſt neere to ſuch as with *Mary* cannot ſee him for their teares and greefes, if with her in humility they ſeeke after him.

VERSE

VERSE. III.

If thou Lord ſhouldeſt marke iniquities: O Lord who ſhall ſtand.

THeſe words arē a removall of hinderances of prayer, following God with an humble confeſſion of that which is evill; which is ever better than a proud boaſting of that which is good; and thus preventing a ſecret objection, which God and a guilty conſcience may make; that he was a guilty wretch, to which hee anſweres by way of confeſſion, truth Lord, yet if thou ſhouldſt marke iniquities, none

none could abide it: whence in generall we may obſerve, that *ſinne hinders and diſcourages the ſoule from prayer*: for the conſcience will object, and the ſoule will upbraide us, telling us we are ſinners; God, he is holy, and how can wee thinke hee will heare us then, where there is no faith; the ſoule muſt needes ſinke, this eſtate was *Davids*, *Pſal.* 15. 15. Sinne and a guilty conſcience, had almoſt ſealed up his lips; and thus was the Publicane, who durſt not lift up his eyes to heaven, and thus will our eſtate be, eſpecially if we yeeld to ſinnes againſt conſcience, like *Adam* we ſhall runne from

Doct. 1. Sinne hinders prayer

from the preſence of God to hide our ſelves, though our former eſtate and converſation with God were never ſo inward and familiar; Therefore let us looke to our ſoules as we deſire to appeare with comfort before the throne of grace, for conſciouſnes of the remainder of ſinne hinders boldneſſe in prayer in the beſt.

2. *Doct.* The way to get out of miſery, is to get diſcharged of ſin.

In the ſecond placē; *The way to get out of miſery is firſt to get diſcharged from ſinne*, for ſinne is the beginning and cauſe of al miſery, therefore the ſonnes of *Iacob* when they were handled roughly by *Ioſeph*, preſently the thought of ſelling *Ioſeph* into *Egypt* came

int o

into their mindes, as the cauſe of all their trouble, though the fact was many yeeres before; and the widdow when her ſonne dyed preſently called to minde her ſinne; *O thou man of God, why commeſt thou to call my ſinne to remembrance and to ſlay my ſon:* If therefore we will remove the miſery, let us remove ſinne firſt. Thus *David* beganne with deſiring pardon, *Pſal.* 143.2. then prayer for deliverance; for miſerie followes ſinne, even as the ſhaddow doth follow the body: Thirdly, we may obſerve from the generall, *that the way to purge and take away ſinne is by confeſſion*: thereby cleering God and

3. *Doct.* The way to take away ſinne is by confeſſion.

and laying loade on our ſelves; the way to cover our ſin is to uncover it by confeſſion: the way for God to ſpare us, is not to ſpare our ſelves; and this God requires not for himſelfe; as if he were not able to be mercifull; but by this meanes, but to the end *that we may glorifie him:* as *Ioſhua* ſayd to *Achan*; *My Sonne give glory to God.* Secondly, God will have it a way to mercie, becauſe *he hath ſo decreed it:* and in the third place that thereby *there may be wrought in our ſoules a greater ſhame for ſinne:* And this confeſſion muſt be ſerious, through, humble with greefe, ſhame, and hatred; every Lord have

have mercy is not enough, for many deceive themſelves this way, miſapplying the promiſes that Chriſt will not breake the bruiſed reed, that he lookes at the deſire, alaſſe theſe belong to ſuch as are not Lazie, that are plaine dealears with themſelves, that will not ſpare themſeves, that by reading, hearing, meditation, conference, and all other duties, will not give over till they have found out the bottome of their iniquity, hidden in their heart, and let onely ſuch apply them; and not thoſe to whom they doe not belong. Thus much in generall, now to come to ſome particulars, and firſt let

4. *Doct.* Sinne is in the beſt.

let us obſerve out of this interrogation, having the force of a ſtrong affirmation; that *the beſt men in the eſtate of grace are ſinners*, ſome may be *ſine Crimine*, but not *ſine peccato*: for in every man *there are two principles*; one of good, another *of evill, the old man and the new*; in all *there is a combate* betweene fleſh and ſpirit, *Chriſt is not a mediator for ſuch as are already perfect*, for mediation needs not bee where all is friendly; and therefore there muſt be ſome enmitie that muſt make Gods Children ſtand in neede of the perpetuall interceſſion of Chriſt, who is a high Prieſt for ever: And *the ſervants*

of

of God have acknowledged thus much, Pſal. 143. Anſwere me in *thy* righteouſneſſe, not *mine* I will not have a quarrell with thee, thou art righteous, I am ſinfull; I may be juſt in mine owne eyes, but in thy ſight no man ſhall be juſtified; *We acknowledge thus much in our dayly prayers*, while we ſtill pray *forgive us our treſpaſſes*, though we profit every day never ſo much, yet like leaking ſhips we gather that which will drowne our ſoules at length if we repent not, for as it is *Eſay* 64. and 6. *Our beſt performances are as filthy ragges. Eſay* 6. 5. *I am a man of polluted lips. Dan.* 9.20. *While I confeſſed my*

owne ſinnes. The Papiſts themſelves imply ſo much, for elſe why teach they the doctrine of doubting; if we be perfect, it is a ſinne to doubt of Salvation; for thereby we deny God to be juſt; if they be perfect what neede they force the doctrine of penance, or of going to Saints to bee their mediator: And when they are upon the racke of Conſcience, the beſt of them will renounce then their dreames of perfection, from this obſervation, therefore we learne, that *no man can perfectly fulfill the Law*: and ſecondly that *there can bee no juſtification by workes:* onely that that muſt make us juſt muſt bee per-

perfect; our best workes are imperfect.

Doct. 5. Communitie of offenders lessen not sinne.

In the next place we may observe that *Communitie of offenders is no ground of lessoning or diminishing of sin.* A formall Christian its his tricke to wrap himselfe up in generall confessions; we are all sinners, and if God should deale with us as we deserve we were damned; but come to reckon with him for his particuler sins, then he is all in a chafe; he cannot bee a Saint, and the like speeches, tending to the defence of his course; the Psalmist is not of this nature; hee argues otherwise; neither *Adam* nor *Abraham* could stand, how much lesse shall I

poore worme; *David* hee aggravates his ſinne, while he tels us that he was conceived and borne in ſinne. But men now adayes, contrarily, you muſt beare with me, its my naturall diſpoſition, I cannot doe otherwiſe, yet doe I not deny, but to the dejected ſinner this may be uſed as a comfort, for while they ſee the maſſe of corruption within them, they preſently conceive worſe of their eſtate and condition, as if none were ſo ill, or in as ill a caſe as they; ſuch ſhould be ſtayed, by conſidering its the generall eſtate of all men, onely the difference is, ſome ſee their ſinnes more then others doe, and thus

thus *Solomon* uſeth it, 2 *Chron.* 6. 35. if any man ſinneth againſt thee, as there is no man that ſinneth not; and God himſelfe uſeth it as an argument to move him to mercy; the imaginations of mans heart are evill continually, therefore my ſpirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with fleſh.

In the next place obſerve *that God opens the heart and eyes of his Children, to ſee and feele what ſinne is*, and keepes their eyes open, and their conſciences continually tender: the wicked are blinde in moſt hainous crimes of all: *David* hee complaines of this, that his ſinne was ever before him, *Pſal.* 51. 3. And God threa-

6. Doct. God makes his children ſee and feele what ſinne is.

tens this, *Pſal.* 50. 22. I will ſet them before thee; & the reaſons hereof are, First, 1. *Reaſon.* *to make our judgements conformable to his in hatred of ſinne*, for wee being his children its fit we ſhould be of his image, and like to him. Secondly, 2. *Reaſon.* *to make us apprehend mercy the more deerely*, and thereby glorifie him in it the more. Thirdly, 3. *Reaſon.* becauſe *he would have us beg of him to cover our ſinnes* from his eyes, that it may bee covered from our eyes; for the beſt cannot ſhake off the ſence of ſinne be it never ſo burthenſome; but God keepes it in our mindes to humble us the more thoroughly. Againe, 4. *Reaſon.* *Gods chil-*

children have a new life which is ſenſible of the leſt thing that is contrary to it ſelfe, and thoſe that are in moſt perfect life are moſt perfect in the ſence of ſinne, though never ſo ſmall, though but motions; where the Sun ſhines moſt cleare, there motes are moſt eaſily ſeene, and therefore the beſt Chriſtians do complain moſt of corruptions, for they ſee more than others doe. Hence therefore wee may know our eſtate whether we are ſtill-borne, or have life; if wee have life wee have light, and can ſee & diſcerne betweene good and evill; ſome are ſtill-borne, yet thinke they live, thus are

many, thinking themſelves unblameable in converſation; yet in heart full of pride, and like the Phariſees count well of themſelves, nothing knowing what belongs to the Chriſtian warrefare. *Others are more bold*, and their very lives bewray, they thinke not of ſinne, but are bold in their courſes; proud in ſpeech and carriage, contemptuous of others and the meanes of ſalvation, contented with a little, and thinke any thing enough: But the worſt of all are thoſe, *that thinke indeede of ſinne, but it is to defend it* and maintaine it by tranſlation and recrimmination; they will bee ſure to

to repay double to thoſe that tell them of their courſes in friendly manner.

But how ſhall we come to be ſenſible of ſinne; *First let us have the picture of the law in our hearts*, ſeeing all ill and the degrees thereof; alſo learne us to deſire to avoyde ſinne, ſo to endeavour to flee all occaſions thereof, though never ſo ſmall, and to take up all occaſions of doing good; and doing good ſpiritually from judgement, affection, faith: and conſider the extent of the law, reaching to the leaſt thought. Secondly, *bring our ſelves continually into the preſence of God*; humane frality appeare, in nothing more, than when

Queſt. How to be ſenſible of ſinne.

1. *Direction.*

2. *Direction.*

its brought to the light, oppoſites being compared illuſtrate one another: Conſider therefore in whoſe preſence we are, what wee are, what God is, what we have done, what he commandeth, and then with *Iob* we ſhall abhorre our ſelves in duſt and aſhes; though formerly we defended our ſelves; *And becauſe God is inviſible, bring our ſelves to that which is divine, heare we the word often unfolded*, and we ſhall with the unbeleever, 1 *Cor.* 14. 24. be convinced and falling downe ſhall confeſſe Gods power with it; furthermore *let us converſe with thoſe that are better than our ſelves*; for the

3. *Direction.*

4. *Direction.*

image

image and likeneſſe of God is ſeene in his children. Its the cuſtome of many men to converſe with the worſt company, that they may appeare to be the beſt; and thus doe they increaſe an overweening ſelfe conceipt in themſelves. Let us alſo *uſe to goe to places viſited with Gods corrections*, for ſeeing miſery the Conſcience retires to it ſelfe, conſidering of the wayes of ſinne, and how the divell payes thoſe that ſerve him; And this uſe we ought to make of objects of miſery, to ſee Gods correcting hand, elſe doe we provoke God, *Eſay* 1. 3, 4, 5. *Who curſeth ſuch*, *Ier.* 5. 3. *and branding them with the brand*

5. *Direction.*

brand of king Ahaz, this is Ahaz. And while we delight our ſelves with pleaſing wordly objects, our eyes ſhut againſt ſinne, but corrections and puniſhments makes them ſee and diſcerne: all Chriſts admonitions could not make *Iudas* ſee his ſin of Covetouſneſſe, which the weight of a burthened conſcience afterward ſo wrought, as could not be pacified, let us looke therefore on the afflictions of other men, of our owne perſons and eſtates, and know the leaſt croſſes comes not without a juſt cauſe. Laſtly, *let us pray to God to give us tender hearts*; not to deliver us up to a hard impenetrable heart,

6. *Direction.*

heart, and to ſpirituall judgements, but to keepe us continually ſenſible of our ſinnes and leaſt infirmities. In the next place out of the manner of delivery of this ſpeech, we may gather thus much, that *ſinne once truely felt, ever unſupportable*, none can ſtand under it: There are three impotencies in ſinners: firſt, they cannot ſee ſinne, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *who can underſtand his errours.* Secondly when the Lord cauſes them to ſee their ſinnes, they cannot juſtifie themſelves: and then in the third place they cannot beare the burthen of them, for death the wages thereof none can beare or indure; nay God himſelfe can-

7. *Doct.* Sinne once truely felt is unſupportable.

cannot indure ſinne, *Amos* 2. 13. (nay the wounded conſcience, which is but a part of the wages thereof in this life none can indure) but is *preſſed under them as a cart loaden with ſheaves*; Chriſt he could not indure them, but had ſuch ſence of them, as if he had beene quite forſaken, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*, and Angels could not beare the burthen, but were throwne downe to hell thereby, and ſo Angels of light, became Angels of infernall darkeneſſe; *Adam* could not indure it till Chriſt rayſed him up by the promiſe of the bleſſed ſeede, and therefore much leſſe can we ſince the fall,

as

as it appeares in *Caine*, *Saul*, *Achitophel*, *Iudas*: The earth could not beare *Corah* and his company, and neither would it beare us, if we had our due; Sinne is a debt we cannot answere, *Iob.* 9.3. *We cannot answere one of a thousand. This therefore confutes the Papists, who say that Christ hath indured the great punishments; but there are other lighter punishments, which we also must undergoe as purgatory*, and the like; to whom we say the wages of the least sinne is death: that which the Angels could not satisfie for, how shall we weake creatures.

1. *Use.* Of confutation.

Secondly, *this may put a just defence into the mouthes of*

2. *Use.* Of justification of carefull Christians.

of Carefull Chriſtians; let others tearme them by what names of ſcorne they liſt; ſuch have good ground for what they doe, they know what ſinne is, and have felt the ſting thereof, and what they doe, they doe it in love to their ſoules: as for them that ſcorne, they know there is more cauſe to pitty them, than envie their eſtate; though they can outſwagger, and outface ſin now, wch none could undergoe heretofore, and though they can with a grace and authoritie as they thinke, cenſure thoſe that are carefull, and themſelves ſweare and prophane the holy Name of God, ſhewing there-

thereby a heart full of unbeleefe, and of unreverence, which is more odious than the ſinne of ſwearing, yet there is a time comming, when God will ſet their ſinnes in order before them, in ſuch manner that they ſhall melt away in the ſenſe of the multitude and greatneſſe of them without hope of releefe, when they ſhall ſee nothing but vengeance and death before their eyes, and without all manner of hope they ſhall dye. *But how comes it to paſſe, will ſome ſay, that many nevertheleſſe ſeeme to beare their ſinnes well enough, and live and dye without teares?* I anſwere, the eſtate of ſuch may

Queſt.

Anſwer.

may bee dangerous, for Chriſt is not ſweete till ſinne be bitter: But God is infinite in wiſedome, not preſently burthening every ſinner, nor comforting thoſe that ſhall deſire it: for then who would not be good, and who would be ill: and if ever more comforts were preſent, what neede were there of faith; and therefore this is moſt eſpecially true at the day of judgement, when the wicked ſhall be blowne away as chaffe, 1 *Pſal.* 4. 5. 6. when there will bee a guilty conſcience, watching devils, and an angry God, where ſhall the wicked then appeare; and there muſt be a hell hereafter,

ter, that men may then feele what now they will not beleeve: *Wherefore let us learne to submit our selves to the correcting hand of God*, saying its thy mercy that we are not consumed, considering that this light affliction is nothing to that we deserve, or that Christ suffered for us, or that the damned suffer in hell; or to that joy we have layd up for us in heaven, and therefore as it is in *Mica.* 7. 9. *Let us beare the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him.* Secondly, *let us justifie God*, wee have deserved affliction, he hath dealt justly with us, *Nehem.* 9. 33. *Righteousnesse belongeth to him, but*

3. *Use of Direction*

1. To submit to God.

2. To justifie God.

to

3. Cenſure not thoſe that are dejected.

to us ſhame and confuſion of face, Dan. 9. 7. Thirdly, *let us moderate our cenſure* of thoſe that are dejected, and out of heart through ſence of ſinne. *Pro. 18. 19. A wounded ſpirit who can beare*, impute it not therefore to Melancholy or deſpaire and madneſſe, or as *Elie* unadviſedly did to drunkenneſſe, when he reprehended *Hanna*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 14. For can we thinke it ſtrange, when God ſees ſinne in his children, that he cauſes them to ſee it; and that when they ſee it they ſhould ſhew it in their outward geſtures? no, tis no light burthen that a man may runne away with.

VERSE

VERS. IV.

But there is forgiveneſſe with thee.

THis Verſe containes a bleſſed appeale; God hath a court of juſtice, and a tribunall of mercy; if God ſhould examine in juſtice what wee have done, wee could not ſtand; but there is mercy or forgiveneſſe with the Lord, therefore its an appeale from the throne of juſtice to the mercy ſeat; and yet this is not ſo properly an appeale, but it admits of limitations: For firſt, *appeales are uſed in aid of thoſe that are innocent*; now wee by nature are all un-

uncleane: againe, *appeales are grounded for the moſt part upon diſcovery of inſufficiencie*, or of violent indirect courſes in the managing of the cauſe; this can no wayes be attributed to God, who is not rigorous nor inſufficient, or ſwayed by indirect means, for he accepts the perſon of none; againe *an appeale is from an inferiour Court to a higher*, but here its not ſo, for wee appeale from God to God, from God armed with juſtice examining by Law, to God a Father armed with love, looking upon us in the comfortable promiſes of the Goſpel, from *Sinai* to *Sion*, from *Moſes* to Chriſt: *And in this*

this appeale as in others, the former ſentence of the Law, whereby wee are *curſed is utterly diſanulled,* ſo as no condemnation is to thoſe that are in Chriſt: But this belongs *to ſuch (as it is in other appeales) who muſt ſee themſelves condemned before* they can have the benefit of this appeale; there is no flying to mercy unleſſe we finde our ſelves in neede. But to come to ſome obſervations, in the firſt place wee may ſee by this example, *That the ſoule of a Chriſtian apprehends God according to its eſtate,* to comfort it ſelfe; and therefore beholds him as a forgiving God: and therefore the Children of God when they

they are at the loweſt, they recover themſelves with ſome thing they finde in Gods nature & promiſe; & to that end have a ſpirit of faith to truſt and relie upon God, and thoſe that have it not, ſinck lower and lower.

Here wee may obſerve, that the *Chriſtian ſoule once ſtung with ſinne flies to the free mercy of God for eaſe*; let a ſinner be in *Hamans* eſtate, tell him of all pleaſures what ever they be, he cares not, nothing but pardon delights his ſoule. *David* a King, a Prophet, a man after Gods owne heart, beloved of his people, wonderfully graced, yet being troubled with ſinne could not ſtand: he reſpects

1. *Doct.* A ſoule ſtung with ſinne ſhould flie to the free mercy of God.

ſpects not his outward priviledges, prerogatives, majeſtie and the like; no hee is the bleſſed man to whom God imputes no ſin, *Pſa.* 32. 1. and this the reaſon why ſo much is attributed ſtill to the blood of Chriſt every where in the Scripture; becauſe the ſoule once pricked finds no eaſe nor cure but in it principally, yet not excluding the other merits and obedience of Chriſt. And *David* when he would raiſe up his ſoule to praiſe God, deſcribes him to bee a God forgiving ſinne and healing infirmities, *Pſal.* 103. and therefore wee ſhould when our conſciences are burthened, goe as *Ioab* did and catch hold on

the hornes of the Altar, to the mercy of God, there live and there d e; and though the conflict be never ſo great, wee ſhall at length finde that as *Iacob* we ſhall be children of *Iſrael*, and ſuch as ſhall prevaile with God; and that for our depth of miſery he hath a depthalſo of mercy; and this mercy will appeare either in preſerving us from ſinne before wee are falne into it, or reskewing us from it if wee be once fane into it. But *how comes it*, may ſome ſay, *that God forgives, doth hee it without ſatisfactions?*

Queſtion.

Anſwer. I anſwer, No, *how then is it done, ſeeing hee hath decreed, that without blood ſhall be*

Queſtion.

be no remiſsion, Heb. 9.22. I anſwer this is done in Chriſt. *But why is hee not mentioned here, nor in the Old Teſtament neither,* I anſwer he was layd downe to us in the Old Teſtament in types and promiſes; for what other was *the Paſcall Lambe,* but the Lambe of God taking away the ſinnes of the world, by ſprinkling our hearts with his blood: he was the Prieſt that before he could open an entrance into the holy of holieſt for us muſt firſt ſhed blood and offer ſacrifice. What ſignified the *Arke with the Law covered within it, the mercy ſeat upon it, and over them two Cherubins covering one another,*

Anſwer.
Queſtion.
Anſwer.

ther, but Christ our Arke covering the curses of the Law, in whom is the ground of all mercy, which things the Angels desire to pry into, as into the patterne of Gods deepe wisdome: And *when as any prayed in the Temple*, they looked toward the mercy seate; what meaneth it other then, that when ever wee doe pray to God, wee should behold Christ through whom God appeares to bee mercifull and gratious: *What signified the Temple towards* which they looked when they prayed, 2 *Cro.* 6. 38. *Dan.* 6. 10? but that wee in our prayers should evermore have reference to our Temple Christ

Christ Iesus, and being thus assured we may safely passe the flaming fire of Gods justice; if there were any other to be trusted besides Christ, there would be no peace of conscience; the sinner would argue, I am a Creature, my sinne is infinite, no creature can satisfie, they are not infinite, Angels cannot stand, it must be an infinite majestie that must satisfie, and it must be with blood, now Christ by his blood hath obtained eternall redemption for us; and therefore none but Christ, none but Christ, he is God-man making God and man at one; its his nature and its his office, so as God is just as

well as mercifull, for as it is, *Rom.* 3. 24. and 25. verses, God the Father hath proposed or set forth Christ in types and figures to be a propitiation, alluding to the mercy seate, to declare his righteousnesse and justice, that he may be just in punishing sinne, that is in Christ, and a justifier of the sinner that beleeves in Christ Iesus, because he accepted of Christs satisfaction, so as his mercy devised a remedy to satisfie his justice. Thus much in generall, now to come to particulars; first take it exclusively, and we may observe that *onely God can release a guilty conscience*, onely he can speake peace to a soule

1. *Doct.* God onely can release a guilty conscience.

ſoule in diſtreſſe; Miniſters in deede have keyes to open and ſhut heaven, but they uſe them only miniſterially, as they finde perſons diſpoſed, but Chriſt independently: now then when as man aſſumes this prerogative to himſelfe, as the Popes were wont to doe, giving indulgences; its no other than to ſet them in the place of God. I even I forgive ſinne ſaith God; none can quiet the conſcience but one that is above the conſcience which is God, who is onely the party offended, though there bee alſo an offence againſt men. *This ought to comfort us, that we have to doe with a forgiving God, Nehem. 9. 31.*

there is none like to him, to whom its naturall to remit and forgive ſinne, its his Name, *Exod.* 34. 6. forgiving iniquities, tranſgreſſions and ſinnes, all manner of ſinnes; ſinnes againſt knowledge and againſt conſcience, with him is plentifull forgiveneſſe.

2. *Doct.* God ever forgives ſinne.

Secondly obſerve, that as God onely forgives ſin, *ſo he ever forgives ſinne*, its alwayes his nature, as the fire alwayes burnes; as he is *Iehovah* hee is mercifull, *Ioh.* 1. 29. Chriſt he is the Lambe of God that doth take away the ſinnes of the world, its a perpetuall act, as wee ſay the Sunne doth ſhine, the Spring doth runne; hee is *Zach.* 13. 1. that

that fountaine that is opened for sinne and uncleanesse, mercy is his nature, and forgiveneſſe is an effect of his mercy: *Therefore its no satisfying objection*, that the distressed soule will be ready to make, that God was mercifull to *David* and *Peter*, but how can hee be to me miserable sinner, for God as hee forgave *Peter*, *Paul*, *David*, so he forgives now, he is a fountaine of mercy never drawne dry, hee is unchangeable and therefore wee are not consumed, *Malac.* 3. 6. and Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; the consideration of this should *be as a perpetuall picture in our hearts.*

Objection.

Answer.

Thirdly, hence we may gather, that *Gods mercy is free, and from himselfe*, though in us is sinne and iniquity, yet in thee is mercy, and therefore God saith, I doe not this for your sakes, but for mine owne names sake, *Ezek. 36. 22.* yet must not this be understood so as if it were freely and onely from God the Father, excluding Christ; but therefore it is in that wee shall stand in neede of no satisfactorie me its of our owne; *away therefore with Popish Doctrines of satisfactions by our owne workes*; the holy man saith not with thee is justice, to take my workes as satisfaction for my sinne, noe

though

though this holy man were a gracious man, yet mercy is all his plea: and if the question be how the sinner stands free from punishment and intitled to all good, it is from forgiveneſſe which is from Gods mercy grounded on Christs satisfaction, all is layd upon him, *Esa.* 53. he was wounded for our transgressions, he bore our sorrowes, hee was made sinne for us that knew no sin e, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. The nature of man will hardly stoope to this divine truth: But the spirit teache h us to relie on the free forgiveneſſe of God in Christ, & therefore Christ and his Apostles bid such beleeve on the Lord Iesus

Christ

Chriſt and thou ſhalt be ſaved, we may thinke this an eaſie leſſon; but hereafter when God ſhall open our ſins and lay them upon our conſciences, they will then tell us fearefull things, ther's no hope thou muſt be damned, againſt ſuch times lay up grounds of comfort, & let this Text be a Haven to reſort to: its true, if thou markeſt what is done amiſſe, who can ſtand, but there is mercy with thee that thou be feared.

4. *Doct.* The beſt need forgiveneſſe of ſinne.

Fourthly, we may from hence obſerve, that *the beſt Chriſtian and moſt gracious man alive needs forgiveneſſe of his ſinnes*, for where the conſcience is inlightned it will diſcover what corruption

tion it findes, and ſo the neceſſity of being delivered, ſo *Ioh* 1.2.1. If any man ſin, wee have an advocate, that is, ſuch as I am have neede of an advocate, and one reaſon may be, becauſe indeed ſuch ſee in their ſins much more ingratitude then others, for they ſinne againſt the knowledge of Gods love to their ſoules in forgiving former ſinnes; and then to fa l into ſinne againe, its as broken bones *Pſal.*51.8. An l the Apoſtle 2 *Cor.*5.20. ſpeaking to the beleeving *Corinthians*, I beſeech you to be reconciled to God, for Chriſt was made ſinne for us, for you, and for me; even wee ſinne daily, and ſtand in neede

need of reconciliation; *we muſt d yly pray, forgive us our ſinnes*, yea the beſt of the Diſciples muſt doe it, if wee come not with this petition, our ſinnes are written with a pen of Iron, and with the claw of an Adamant.

5. *Doct.* Fifthly, *This mercy and forgiveneſſe, is gen rall to all that caſt themſelves on his free mercy*: its Sathans ſubtilty to perſwade us at the firſt, that ſin is nothing; but when its committed and cannot be recalled; then he tels us its greater than can be pardoned: No, the Goſpell is the power of God to Salvation to all that doe beleeve; let none deſpaire, its a greater ſinne than

than the former. *Deus non eſt deſperantium pater, ſed judex:* Gods pardon is generall to all perſons that repent of all ſinne; whereby he frees them from all evill: *he pardons all perſons, Manaſſes* the ſorcerer, *Cornelius, Zacheus*, perſecuting *Paul*, the parable of the loſt ſheepe, the loſt groate, the prodigall ſonne teſtifies it. God offers it freely, *Why will you dye, O houſe of Iſrael!* he complaines when tis neglected; *O Ieruſalem Ieruſalem, how oft would I have gathered you together; he threatens* becauſe men will not heare, and *he pardons all ſinnes*; there is no diſeaſe above the skill of this Phyſition, hee healeth all

all thy ſinnes and all thy infirmities, *Pſal.* 103. 1. 3. Yea if it were poſſible that the ſinner againſt the holy Ghoſt could repent, there were hope in *Iſrael* concerning this! he hath pardon for ſinne long lived in, *At what time ſoever a ſinner repenteth, he will blot out his wickednes*: what though they be never ſo enormous: Gods thoughts are not as ours: *Eſay* 55. 8. Conſcience may be overcharged with ſin: we may play the harlot with many lovers, yet returne to me ſaith the Lord, *Ier.* 3. 1. He that bids *Peter* forgive 77 times; ſhall not he have plenteous redemption: what proportion is there betweene the

ſinne

ſinne of a Creature and the mercie of an infinite majeſtie: he frees from all ill, from all puniſhment; his forgiveneſſe is perfect, though we bee as red as crimſon with ſinne, he will make us white as ſnow, *Eſay* 1.18. he removes our ſinnes from his preſence as farre as the Eaſt is from the Weſt.

But ſome will ſay *why corrects he then his children?* *Queſt.*

I anſwere, not from revenging juſtice, for hee is our father, and what hee does it comes from love and is mingled with love, and moderated with love to our ſtrength, and are turned by love to our good, when *Anſw.*

when he followes us with prosperity he is our alluring father, and when hee corrects us he is our correcting, not punishing father, *Heb.* 12. from 3. to the 12. Yet let not this be sinisterly taken, its *spoken onely to the humble heart thats broken with sinne*: which is the sixth generall observation, there must be first sight of sinne, then sense of miserie, then confession of sinne and begging pardon: or else none is granted, for God bestowes pardon so as may be most for his glory, and our comfort, what glory can he reape by pardoning those that wil sinne, *because grace may abound, and so will turne the grace of God into*

into wantonneſſe, and what comfort, can wee have of the pardon of our ſinnes, till we ſee our ſinnes, and feele what it is to want pardon; Sight of ſin and mercie are unſeparable, ſometimes the ſence of pardon is delayed to make us hunger after it, ſometimes it followes ſuddenly after ſight of ſinne, as it did to *Matthew* and *Zacheus*, *Mat.* 11. 28. but one muſt goe before the other: firſt muſt the winde of the ſight of Gods anger, come breaking and rending the rockie hard hearts that are within us, then comes the ſoft ſtill voice ſpeaking peace to the humble ſoule. The reaſons may be *firſt to ſet an edge on*

our prayers for forgiveneſſe, elſe who would care for it. Secondly *to make us highly to eſteeme forgiveneſſe of ſinne*, the promiſes are ſweet to the dejected ſoule as a pardon is to the condemned perſon. Thirdly, *that God might have the more glory and thankes*; when we find the bitterneſſe of ſin as it is, *Ier.* 2.19. to be ſweetned by Gods mercy, then my ſoule praiſe thou the Lord, and all that is within me prayſe his holy name, he forgives all my ſin, and heales all my infirmities, *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2, 3. And laſtly *becauſe our ſinnes unrepented keepe good from us, and us from the fountaine of all good*, and muſt be remooved

ved before there can be any way for mercy.

This therefore juſtifies thoſe miniſters that in theſe dayes of the Goſpell doe inforce the Law, and people muſt not be offended thereat, but ſuffer their conſciences to be layd open, that the word may come cloſe & home to thē, and ſecondly they muſt uſe the meanes to come to a ſence and feeling of their ſinne. To which end let *us make ſinne as odious and dangerous in our eyes as wee can:* Its odious to God, to us its poiſon and leproſie though wee cheriſh it, and hate Miniſters and friends for touching it, its abomination to God, it thruſts

thruſts him out of our hearts, and puts in the Divell Gods arch enemy, it cauſes us to preferre baſe pleaſure, fading profits before the favour and mercy and love of God, muſt not this needes bee hatefull to God; but then how much more intollerable are thoſe ſinnes that bring neither profit nor pleaſure, but cauſes us to thruſt out God, even becaſe we will: But this is not all, for as its abominable to God, *ſo its dangerous to us*; for whence comes judgements, whence is it that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, *Rom.* 1.18. whence is ſickneſſe, diſgrace, troubles, all theſe are the fruits of ſin, no-

nothing makes us miſerable but ſinne. Take a man when he lies a dying, aske him what troubles him? O he cries out of ſinne, of the wrath of God, hee feeles not ſickneſſe; even as the Goute is not felt by one that hath a fit of the ſtone upon him: Let us thinke of this in time, let us ſhame the Divell, ſhame our ſelves: *but is this all*, no, *Iudas* ſaw his ſinne and confeſſed, yet was hee never the better; hee wanted that which ſhould make his repentance perfect; hee wanted Faith to lay hold on pardon: a poore man is fit for treaſure, but unleſſe hee lay hold on treaſure hee ſhall never bee rich; therefore faith

faith and repentance are ever joyned in the Goſpel, repent and beleeve the Goſpell, as was ſayd to the jaylour, ſo Chriſt ſaith come to me, Chriſt came to ſatisfie for all ſinne, to cure all diſeaſes, but they muſt firſt come to him, and ſay, Lord if thou wilt thou canſt make me cleane; and to ſuch as theſe, I may ſay as they ſayd to the blind man, bee of comfort for Chriſts calls thee.

That thou mayſt be feared.

Feare in this place is taken for the ſpirituall worſhip of God, ariſing from a reverentiall feare mingled with love, feare God and keepe

keepe his Commandements is the whole duty of man; so that these words being considered with the former, brings this observation to our consideration; *That Gods goodnes, forgiveneſſe, grace and mercy is a meanes to ſtirre up his children to all duties*: and therefore we are commanded to doe all things in feare, to worke out our ſalvation with feare, *Phil.* 2. 12. eate and drinke with feare, and in *Iude.* 12. the wicked are branded with this, that they eate without feare, so as what ever we doe, we muſt doe it in feare, ſhewing the reverence of God continually and jealouſie over our ſelves, leſt wee ſhould

Doctrine. Gods goodneſſe ſtirres up to duty.

stop the light of Gods countenance from us.

Quest. But it will be sayd, *How is it then sayd that we should serve him without feare*, being redeemed from our enemies.

Answ. I answer, there is a twofold feare; one a slavish feare, whereof that place is meant, wee should serve him without feare of damnation, of punishment & of judgment; but the feare that we speake of here, is a feare of reverence and love that stirres us up to worship him.

Quest. But how doth it stirre to duty may some say?

Answer. I answer, first it *stirres up faith in our hearts*, hope of forgiveneſſe will cause us to cast our selves into their armes whom they have of-

1. It stirres up Faith.

fen-

fended; where no hope of mercy, is there followes nothing but feare, cauſing us to flie away, even as wee ſee Proclamation of pardon to rebells cauſes them to come in, but the contrary makes them run away. *Againe, ſence of forgiveneſſe workes more love, Davids* murther, *Pauls* perſecution, *Peters* deniall, cauſed abundance of love: where many ſinnes are forgiven, there will be much love, and where much love is, there will be obedience to all Gods Commandements, for love is the fulfilling of the Law, contrarily deſperation is the ground of all ſinne, this is the ground of all hate. The

2. It works more love.

Divels they hate God, becauſe they know there is no remedie left for them, therefore they cannot indure the remembrance of him; contrariwiſe, as it is, *Pſal.*65. 2. unto thee ſhall all fleſh come, why? for thou heareſt prayer. Againe, *feare and forgiveneſſe are joyned in the new covenant*; I will put my feare in thy heart, and thou ſhalt not depart from mee, and Chriſt to all his is both King, Prieſt and Prophet; he comes to all by water as well as blood; he is become righteouſneſſe, wiſedome and holineſſe. Againe, *a Chriſtian he will by reaſon inforce this on himſelfe*, as *Paul* did, 2 *Cor.* 5. 15.

3. Feare and forgiveneſſe are joyned.

15. Chriſt dyed for us, therefore muſt wee live to him and not to our ſelves. This therefore ſhould cauſe us *to take heed of all thoughts of deſpaire:* Let it be enough that wee have broken the law, let us not pull a greater ſin on us by denying the Goſpel, the mercies and truths of God; let us by any meanes take heede, for Sathan will joyne with guilty conſciences, ſpeaking with curſed *Caine*, my ſinne is greater then can be pardoned, no article of our Creede is ſo much oppoſed by him, as that of the forgiveneſſe of ſin by Chriſts merits, wch is the very life and ſoule of a Church; all the former Articles of the

Uſe. To take heede of deſpaire.

Creede are perfected in this, and all the following Articles are effects hereof.

Use. Answer to the Papists.

Secondly, this Doctrine *furnishes an answer to the Papists, who lay* scandalls on the doctrine of free justification by the merits of Christ, without our owne works, saying that we nourish thereby carelessnesse in a Christian life, when as the Scripture and the Spirit of God in the hearts of those that are truly regenerate doe reason quite contrary; there is mercy with thee that thou maist be feared; not that we may live as we list, for whom God forgives hee first truly humbles; whom he washes he gives hearts to

to keepe themſelves cleane, ſo as with the burnt child, they dread the fire ever after: no it is themſelves that overthrowes good workes, while they ground them on falſe grounds, for either they doe them to ſatisfie Gods wrath, which is ſlaviſh, or to merit by them which is a token of a hireling, and moſt of their workes are ſuch, as if God ſhould aske them, who required them at their hands, they could never be able to anſwere. They while they talke of Good workes, in the meane t me overthrow faith and love, which ſhould bee the ground of a good wo ke; what can they doe more

than a *Cain* or a *Iudas*, or the wickedeſt man alive.

Vſe of tryall.

Secondly, *we may hence gather a ground of diſcerning our eſtate*, whereby we ſhall know whether Gods mercy and forgiveneſſe belongs to us or not; for it is impoſſible, where there is no inward worſhip of God in the heart; where there is no feare and jealouſie of ſinne; where there is no conſcience of ſwearing, blaſpheming, and ſuch abhominations, that ever ſuch yet had any true taſte of Gods mercy and forgiveneſſe: Let them not take comfort by the example of the theefe on the croſſe, that cryed for mercy and had it; for there is a time of grace,

grace, and there are ſome ſinners (as thoſe that flatter themſelves in a courſe of ſinne, thinking to repent when they will) againſt which the wrath of God will ſmoake, *Deut.* 20. Therefore let not ſuch ſooth up themſelves, thoſe that have their ſinnes forgiven doe feare God, ſuch feare not God, and therefore their ſinnes are not forgiven, many ſhall ſay in that day, Lord, Lord; to whom Chriſt will profeſſe he never knew them; and therefore let us never aſſure our ſelves of forgiveneſſe, farther then we finde in us a hatred of ſinne, for a man to live in a courſe of knowa ſinne, it ſtops the current

of Gods mercie: who will wound the hayrie scalpe, of such as despise the patience and long suffering of God; while we have time therefore and are young, before lusts settle themselves in us: serve the Lord with feare, denie him not the service due to him; it we do its just with God to take us away suddainly, or to deliver us over to an impenetrable hard heart, and when we dye, that God should take away from us our sences, or to give over our consciences to such a horrour and trembling feare, as shall not suffer us to come so neere, as to have any hope of mercy, but dye in despaire: Let us pray therefore

fore againſt a careleſſe heart, and ſay to him, Lord thou cameſt to redeeme and ſet mee free from the workes of the Devill, Lord deliver mee from the power of ſinne and of my owne corruption; for we may aſſure our ſelves, hee that never diſcerned this hatred of ſinne in him, never asked pardon from his heart, and he that never askes it ſhall never have it.

Let us in the next place learne thereby *to goe the right way, to worke aſſurance of forgiveneſſe; firſt learne to ſee our miſery: then get perſwaſion that there is a remedie; then get knowledge thereof; and laſtly begge it,*

Uſe. Of direction.

Its

Its a prepoſterous courſe that many men take, they will change their ill courſes but without confeſſion or acknowledgement of ſinne, and therefore they turne indeede, but it is from one ſinne to another; from being diſſolute they will be covetous, and ſo change to the worſe; for they change not from right grounds, not from love of God, and hatred of ſinne, but ever from the love of one raigning ſinne to another; for all ſuch, and all other, that either finde their ſinne, or thinke not of it; this ſcripture is of excellent uſe, and we may ſpeake of it as Saint *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. ſpeakes of all the ſcripture, its profitable

fitable for doctrine, teaching us what we are by nature ſince the fall; wherein wee may have remedy of our miſery; how and in what manner to attaine to the remedy; its profitable for reproofe of the doctrine of juſtification by workes, and its profitable for correct on of our lives, teaching us to voide diſpare, and yet withall to avoyde ſecurity, its profitable for comfort to all thoſe that are dejected by ſinne; by conſideri-g the mercy of God in Chri ſt, which is more and greater than ſinne in us, if we have faith to lay hold on it, ſee that we may ſay with Saint *Auguſtine*, *Ego admiſi, unde tu damnare po-*

tes

tes me, ſed non amiciſti unde tu Salvare potes me.

VERSE. V.

I waite for the Lord, yea my ſoule waiteth.

THeſe words doe ſhew the eſtate and diſpoſition of the holy man, after his prayer; though he had formerly ſence of mercie and pardon, yet he waits for more full and ſweete apprehenſion thereof. In them we may obſerve, firſt *though God be exceeding gracious, yet there is matter of waiting* ſo long as wee live here on earth, for hee gives not all the fulneſſe of

Doct. We ſhould waite upon God.

of his bleſſing at once, though hee may give taſte of pardon of ſinne in preſent, yet not preſently deliverance out of danger: *the light of the righteous ſhineth more and more, unto the perfect day*; *Pro.* 4. there is no day that is perfected in an inſtant: and the reaſons hereof may be, firſt *to force us to ſearch our ſoules*, whether we be fit for bleſſing, whether we be throughly humbled, & have throughly repented or not; thus dealt he with *Ionas*, and thus w th the ch ldren of *Iſrael* for *Achans* cauſe. 1. *Reaſon.*

Secondly, it may be a meanes to ſtirre us up to more earneſtneſſe in ſeeking to make us like the woman 2. *Reaſon.*

woman of *Canaan*, more earneſt the more ſhe was repelled.

3. *Reaſon* Thirdly, he gives us occaſion of waiting, to ſhew the truth and ſoundneſſe of his graces in us, otherwiſe ſhould we have no meanes to try how the grace in us would ſerve us in time of neede.

4. *Reaſon* Fourthly, hereby God doth indeere thoſe favours that we want, that it may come the more welcome to us, and we be the more thankefull for it, thus God dealt with this holy man, and thus doth he with his Church, for while we live here, we are alwayes children of hope, not miſerable becauſe we have a ſweete taſte

taſte of what we hope for, and not perfectly happie becauſe we want fulneſſe: before Chriſt they hoped for his comming in the fleſh, ſince Chriſt we looke for his ſecond comming in glory, in grace we looke for glory, and when our ſouls are in glory, they looke for the redemption of the bodies, and for the day of reſtoring of all things: *how long Lord, how long?* elſe would this life be heaven to us, and wee ſhould not deſire or pray, Lord let *thy Kingdome come*. And for uſe, *this ſhould whet in us our deſires and prayers, for our heavenly eſtate*, and not make our heaven here on earth, but deſire

Uſe. To whet our deſires & prayers for heaven.

desire earnestly the full harvest by considering how excellent the first fruites of glory in this life are: and with the creature *Rom.* 8. 19. waite, and expect, and long, and groane for the time of the dissolut on of all things; and make this *a not to discerne of our estate: for its a certaine infallible token* of a good frame of spirit, in us if wee can long for that better life, in the fulnesse that we have here, that we can desire to be with Christ. Furthermore note *this as a difference betweene the estates of the wicked and the Godly.* The wicked must looke for worse and worse continually, his best is here and

Note.

2. *Vse.*

and while hee hath this world; but the godly their worst is here, their best is to come.

FINIS.

THE SAINTS HAPPINESSE.

PSAL. 73. 28.

But its good for me to draw neare to God.

THis Psalme is a Psalme of *Asaph* or of *David*, commended to *Asaph* who was a Seer and a Singer; it represents one in a conflict afterward re-

recovered and in a triumphant concluſion it begins abruptly, as if he had gained this truth; ſay fleſh and Sathan what they can, yet this I am reſolved of, I finde God is yet good to *Iſrael*; then he diſcovers what was the cauſe of this conflict, it was his weakeneſſe and doubt of Gods promiſes in Verſ. 13. occaſioned from the great proſperitie that the wicked injoyed, deſcribed from the 2. verſe to the 13 Then hee ſets downe his recoverie in the 17. verſe, he went into the Sanctuary and ſaw what God ment to doe with them at laſt, then followes the accompliſhment of the victory in the 23. verſe. I

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am continually with thee, thou haſt holden me up, thou wilt guide mee now and bring mee to glory, therefore there is none in heaven but thee, though nature may be ſurpriſed, yet God is my helpe, and for the wicked they ſhall periſh, nay thou haſt deſtroyed them, therefore *it is good for me to draw nigh to God.*

Now from that which hath beene layd open wee may obſerve; firſt, *that Gods deareſt children are exerciſed with ſharpe conflicts in the faith of principles, yea of Gods providence*; this ſhould comfort ſuch as God ſuffers to caſt forth mire and dirt of incredulitie,

Doctrine. Gods children are exerciſed with conflicts about the beleefe of principles.

litie, its the common caſe of Gods deareſt children, yea of the Prophets of God, *David*, *Ieremiah*, and *Habbakkuk*, & therefore we ought not to bee dejected too much, and the rather becauſe (which alſo wee may note in the ſecond place) *Gods children though they be thus low yet they ſhall recover*, and after recovery comes a triumph. They may begin to ſlip a little but ſtill Gods hand is under them, and his goodneſſe ever lower then they can fall, and this ſhould teach us to diſcerne of our eſtates aright, and to expect ſuch conflicts; yet to know that ſtill Gods Spirit will not bee wanting to checke

Doct. Gods children ſhall recover from ſuch conflicts.

checke and repreſſe ſuch thoughts in the fitteſt time; contrarily its a principle to wicked men to doubt of Gods providence, and therefore they ſuffer ſuch temptations to rule in them.

In the next place obſerve *the way for a Chriſtian to recover his ground in time of temptation, is for him to enter into Gods Sanctuary*, and not to give liberty to his thoughts to range in, conſidering the preſent eſtate that he is in; but looke to former experiences, in himſelfe, in others; ſee the promiſes and apply them: it ſhall goe well with the righteous, but woe to the wicked, it ſhall not goe well

Doct. The way to recover out of temptation, is to goe into Gods Sanctuary. What that is.

well with them, this is to goe into the Sanctuary, and happy man thou art and in high favour whom God admitteth ſo neare to him: the world will tell thee of Corne, and Wine, & Oyle, and how great and glorious men are here, but the Sanctuary will ſhew thee they are ſet in ſlippery places: Carnall reaſon will tell thee God hath left the earth, hee ſees not, hee governes not, all are out of order, but the Sanctuary will ſhew thee all things are beautifull in their time; marke the end of the righteous, *Pſal.* 33. 37. See *Ioſeph*, once a priſoner, after Lord of *Ægypt*, *Lazarus* once contemned and diſpiſed,

ſed, after in *Abrahams* boſome; Chriſt himſelfe once a rebuke and ſcorne of all on the Croſſe, but now triumphing on the right hand of God, farre above all principalities and power; all Gods wayes are mercy and truth, though wee ſeeme never ſo much forſaken for the preſent. Againe, from *Davids* obſerving the ſtate of wicked men, its ſayd, hee ſaw the proſperity of wicked men; we may gather *whether it be the eye of faith, or the eye of ſence, all ſerveth to bring us nearer to God.* God repreſents to the outward view of his Children, the example of his juſtice on others to draw his Chil-

Doct. God uſeth not only the eye of faith, but the eye of ſence to bring us neerer to him.

dren nearer home, and its one maine reaſon why God ſuffers varietie of conditions in men, that his children may gaine experience from ſeeing their behaviour, and by converſing with them.

Doct. The courſe of the children of God is contrary to the ſtreame of the world.

Laſt of all, from the connexion of this Text with the former words, *obſerve that the courſe of the Children of God is a courſe contrary to the ſtreame of the world*; they withdraw away from thee, and ſhall periſh, ſaith the Prophet, but its good for me to draw neare, as if hee had ſayd, let others take what courſe they will, it matters not much, I will looke to my ſelfe, *it is good for mee to draw*

draw neare to God, and the reaſon is, becauſe they are guided by the ſpirit of God, which is contrary to the world, and the Spirit teacheth them to ſee, not after the opinions of the world that is their beſt friend, but God is my beſt friend that will never forſake me, *Phil.* 3. many walke that are enemies to the Croſſe of Chriſt, but our converſation is in heaven; and then a Chriſtian hath experience of the wayes of God, and by it hee is every day ſetled in them, by it he ſees what the world workes in others, and how God is oppoſite to them, and thereby hee is made more zealous; as in win-

1. *Reaſon.* Becauſe they are guided by the ſpirit of God.

ter time the body is more hot within then in Summer, and thoſe that are well grounded grow more ſtrong by oppoſition, and however they may ſometimes ſtagger, yet their motion is conſtant.

Vſe of tryall.

Vſe, If we will know our eſtates, examine after what rule we leade our life, and what principles we follow, if outward weights of the love of the world, ſelfe love, or the like doe moove us, as Clockes that goe no longer then the weights hang on them, this ſhewes that we are but actors of the life of a Chriſtian, and that we are not naturally moved, that our nature is not changed, and that

that weeare not made partakers of the Divine nature, for then our motion would come from above, my life and fleſh may faile, but thou Lord wilt never faile, therefore it is good for me to draw neare to thee; which words proceeding from an experimentall triall of *David*, of the goodneſſe and happineſſe of this neareneſſe to God, afford us this conſideration, *that Gods ſpirit inableth his children by experience to juſtifie Wiſedome*; hee ſuffers his children to meete with oppoſitions but they may ſee they ſtand by an almighty power above their owne, and above the power of their

Doct. Gods ſpirit inableth his children by experience to juſtifie Wiſedome.

enemies, *nihil tam certum eſt, quam quod poſt dubiũ certum eſt*, and therefore thoſe that have felt the bitterneſſe of their ſinnes, know how bitter it is, and thoſe that have beene overcome in temptations know their nature is weake, and thoſe that have felt the unconſtancie of the world, and the vanitie of it, know its a bitter thing to be farre from God, and therefore they reſolve *Hoſ.* 2.7. *I will goe to my firſt husband, for then it was better with me than now*, and as the prodigall *there is meate enough in my fathers houſe, why then doe I periſh here with hunger*, and therefore if we will ever thinke to ſtand out reſolute-

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ly in our courſes againſt tryalls, we muſt labour for experience and diligently obſerve Gods dealings, its experience that breedeth patience and hope (experience of a truth ſeales a truth with a *probatum eſt*) and without it the beſt and ſtrongeſt judgements will in time of tryall be ready to be juſtled out of the maintenance thereof, and great profeſſours will be aſhamed of their good courſes.

Opening the words.

But to come to the particulars, *its good*, that is, it puts in us a bleſſed quality and diſpoſition, it makes a man to be like God himſelfe, and ſecondly *its good*, that is, its comfortable, for its the happineſſe

Its good.

of

of the creature, to be neere the Creator, its beneficiall and helpfu l.

To draw neere.

To draw neere, how can a man but be neere to God, ſeeing he filleth heaven and earth, *whither ſhall I goe from thy preſence? Pſal.* 139. he is preſent alwayes in power and providence in all places, but graciouſly preſent with ſome by his ſpirit, ſupporting, comforting, ſtrengthening the heart of a good man, as the ſoule is ſayd to be *tota in toto* in ſeverall parts by ſeverall faculties, ſo God, preſent he is to all, but in a diverſe manner, now we are ſayd to be neere to God in diverſe degrees: firſt, when our *underſtanding is inlightned*,

We are neerer God in diverſe reſpects.

I.

lightned, intellectus eſt veritatis ſponſæ, and ſo the young man ſpeaking diſcreetly in things concerning God, is ſayd not to be farre from the kingdome of God. Secondly, *in minding*, when God is preſent to our minds, ſo as the ſoule is ſayd to be preſent to that which it mindeth; contrarily its ſayd of the wicked, that God is not in all their thoughts. Thirdly, when the *will* upon *the diſcovery* of the underſtanding comes to chuſe the better part, and is drawne from that choiſe to cleave to him, as it was ſayd of *Ionathans* heart, it was knit to *David*. Fourthly, when *our whole affections are carryed to God*, loving

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3.

4.

loving him as the chiefe good, love is the firſt borne affection, that breedes deſire of communion with God, thence comes joy in him, ſo as the ſoule pants after God, *as the Hart after the water ſprings.* Fifthly, *and eſpecially when the ſoule is touched with the ſpirit of God working faith,* ſtirring up dependance, confidence and truſt on God, hence ariſeth ſweete communion, the ſoule is never at reſt till it reſts on him; then is it afraide to breake with him or to diſpleaſe him, but it groweth zealous and reſolute and hot in love, ſtiffe in good caſes, reſolute againſt his enemies (and yet this is not all, *for*

God

God will have alſo the out-ward man, ſo as the whole man muſt preſent it ſelfe before God in Word, in Sacraments, ſpeake of him and to him with reverence, and yet with ſtrength of affection mounting up in prayer, as in a fiery Chariot, heare him ſpeake to us conſulting with his oracles, fetching comforts againſt diſtreſſes, directions againſt maladies.) Sixthly, and eſpecially we draw neere to him when wee praiſe him, for this is the worke of the ſoules departed, and of the Angels in heaven, that are continually neere unto him, and thus much for the opening of the words, the Prophet here

ſaith

ſaith its good for me, how came he to know this? why he had found it by experience, and by it hee was throughly convinced of it; ſo *ſpirituall conviction is the ground of practiſe*, for naturally the will followeth the guidance of the underſtanding, and when it is convicted of the goodneſſe of this or that thing, the will moveth toward it, now there are foure things that goe to conviction, firſt the underſtanding muſt be inlightned to ſee the truth of the thing, t at there is ſuch a thing, and that its no fancie. Secondly, we muſt know it to be good, as the Goſpell is called the good Word of God. Thirdly, that

Doct. Spirituall conviction is the ground of practiſe.

Foure things worke conviction

that tis good for me. And laſtly, upon comparing all theſe together, it is the beſt for me of all, though other things ſeeme to be good in their kinde, a wicked man may be convinced that heaven and grace are good things, but his corrupted affections perſwades him its better to live in pleaſure and luſt, and when death comes then he may repent, for God is mercifull, but a good man preferreth drawing neere to God above all, and therefore we ſhould labour for this conviction of our ſpirts, for its not enough to heare, reade, diſcourſe, pray, but wee muſt get the ſpirit to ſet to his ſeale to all upon our hearts, and this

this made *Moſes* in ſober ballancing of things, chuſe rather to draw neere to God and joyne with his afflicted brethren, than to be in honour in *Pharaohs* court, to be the ſonne of *Pharaohs* daughter, or to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, for he had reſpect to the reward he was convinced that there was more to be gotten with them than amongſt the *Ægyptians*: thus *Abraham* came to forſake his Country, and the Diſciples to forſake all and follow Chriſt: and undoubtedly the ground of all prophaneneſſe is from Atheiſme that is within; would the ſwearer trample upon the Name of God, if he did beleeve and were con-

convinced, that he ſhould not be guiltleſſe? would the filthy perſon come neere ſtrange fleſh, if hee were perſwaded that God would judge? would any wicked man change an eternall joy for a minutes pleaſure? if he did beleeve the unrighteous ſhould not inherite the Kingdome of God, nay the beſt have a remainder of this corruption of Atheiſme; *David*, ſo tooliſh was I and a beaſt, from hence come all ſinne againſt knowledge and conſcience in men, whereof *David* complaines; keepe me that preſumptuous ſins prevaile not over me, or get not dominion over mee, *Pſal.* 19. *and for remedy* againſt

gainſt this vilde corruption there is no way but the *immediate helpe of the holy ſpirit*, and therefore *Ioh.* 16. 9. Its ſayd that the ſpirit when it comes *ſhall convince the world of ſinne*, that is, it ſhall ſo manifeſt ſinne to be in the whole world, becauſe of the generall unbeleefe, as they ſhall ſee no remedy but in Chriſt, and therefore wee ſhould before hand *ſearch out the crafty allurements to ſinne*, that we may be provided to give them an anſwer when they ſet upon us, leaſt wee be ſuddenly overcome; and labour *to ſee the excellencie* of the things that are freely given us of God, which amongſt o-

ther

ther titles are called a feaſt, a feaſt of fat things, now if we will not feaſt with him, how doe we ever thinke to ſuffer with him, if he ſhould call us thereto. *It is good*, how is it good? both in quality and condition, for while wee are here in this world we are as ſtrangers, & in an eſtate of imperfection as it were; *Paul* ſaith, while he was preſent in the body hee was abſent from the Lord, and the more neare perfection we are, the more neare muſt wee be to the ground of all perfection, and this is onely in God. For firſt, *he is goodneſſe it ſelf*, he hath the beauty of all, the ſtrength of all, the goodneſſe of all, originally in

God the ground of all perfection.

1. Hee is goodneſſe it ſelfe.

in himſelfe; hee is the gathering together of all excellencie and goodneſſe. Secondly, *he is the univerſall good*, hee is good to all, what all hath (that is good) commeth from him; of creatures, ſome have beauty, others riches, others have honours, but God hath all together. Thirdly, he is the All-ſufficient and ſatisfactory good, the goodneſſe of no creature can give full content, for the ſoule of man is capable of more then all created goodneſſe together can ſatisfie, onely its filled with Gods likeneſſe, and ſatisfied with communion with him, the beſt thing here to ſatisfie the ſoule (as *Salomon* wit-

2. He is an univerſall good.

3. He is an Al-ſufficient ſatisfactory good.

witneſſeth) is knowledge, and yet it contents not the heart of man, *ſine Deo omnis copia eſt egeſtas, Bernard,* God alone filleth every corner of the ſoule in him, we are ſwallowed up with joy unſpeakeable, and peace that paſſeth underſtanding, eye cannot ſee it, eare cannot heare it, heart of man cannot conceive thoſe things which even in this life are but beames of his brightneſſe. Fourthly, *God is a goodneſſe that is proportionable and fitting to our ſoules, which is the beſt part in a man,* and that which we draw neere unto muſt communicate ſome lovelineſſe, for that moves us to draw neare to it, now God is

4. He is a fitting good for the ſoule

is a ſpirit fit to coverſe with our ſpirits, and he is love, and can anſwere the love and drawing neere of our ſpirits with love and drawing neere to us againe; the things of this world cannot love us ſo as to give us content, or to helpe us in the day of wrath. Fiftly. *nothing can make us happie, but drawing neere to God*, if there were nothing in the world better than man, then man would be content with himſelfe, but by nature its evident, man ſeeth a better happineſſe than is in himſelfe, and therefore hee ſeeketh for it out of himſelfe, and as *Salomon* tryed all things and found no happineſſe but in the feare

5 Nothing can make us happy but drawing neere to God.

feare of God, ſo man cannot reſt in any outward content till hee comes to God, as the Creator of all happineſſe, and the ſpring-head from whence the ſoule had its originall, and therefore *Iohn* 1. 3. All the Goſpell is to this end that we may have fellowſhippe with the Father and his Son, Ieſus Chriſt, & 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. Chriſts ſufferings to this end, that being dead in the fleſh, but quickned in the ſpirit, he might bring us againe to God, *Epheſ.* 1. 10. and 22. that he might gather all into one head; by ſinne wee were ſcattered from God, from Angels, and from our ſelves, but now by Chriſt we are made

one, with one another, and with the holy Angels, one with God our chiefe good, for uſe herof, it *ſhould teach us to labour to attaine to this eſtate of being ſpiritually convinced of the goodneſſe of God*, that we may by experience ſay, its good for mee to draw neere to God, for God will not eſteeme of us according to our knowledge, but as our affections are, & therefore the wicked man hee calls a worldling, becauſe the world filleth him, let his knowledge be never ſo great. And the Church in the *Revelation* is called heaven, becauſe their affections and mindes are that way, and againe, the more we are convinced of Gods

Uſe.

Gods goodneſſe, the better we are, for Gods goodnes taſted and felt by the ſoule, doth innoble it as a pearle ſet in a Gold Ring, maketh it the more rich and precious. But to come to the eſtate that is ſo commended to us, its deſcribed to us by drawing neere unto God, ſo as we may take this for a received ground, that *Mans happineſſe is in Communion with God*, before the fall of man, there was a familiar Converſation with God, but by the ſinne of our firſt Parents we loſt this great happineſſe, and now we are ſtrangers and as contrary to God, as light is contrary to darkeneſſe, and hell to heaven, he holy, we impure,

Doct. Mans happineſſe is in Communion with God.

he full of knowledge, wee ſtarke fooles, and inſtead of delighting in him, we now tremble at his preſence, and are afraid of ſuch Creatures as approach nigh to him, trembling at the preſence of Angels, nay, afraid of a holy man, what have I to doe with thee thou man of God, art thou come to call my ſins to remembrance, and therefore wee flye the company of good men, becauſe their carriage and courſe of life doe upbraid us, and hence it is that at the leaſt apprehenſion of Gods diſpleaſure, wicked men doe quake, the heathen Emperour trembled at a thunder clap. But God in his infinite mercy and good-

goodneſſe left us not, but entertaining a purpoſe to chooſe ſome to draw neere unto him, and to this end hee hath found out a way for man, and him to meete, but no way for the Angels, and the foundation of this vnion is in Chriſt, in whom he reconciled the world to himſelfe, for he being God became man, ſo to draw man backe againe unto God, and thus like *Iacobs* ladder, one end of it is in heaven, the other on earth, the Angels aſcending and deſcending, ſhew a ſweete intercourſe betweene God and man, now reconciled together, ſo as Chriſt is now a living way for ever, being the way the truth

and the life, he is a way far more neere and ſure then wee had in *Adam*, for in him God was in man, but now man ſubſiſteth in God, ſo as our nature is now ſtrengthned by him, who alſo hath inriched it and advanced it, and what he hath wrought in his owne humane nature, hee by little and little will work in al his miſticall members, ſo being once farre of, wee are now made neere, and this hee did principally by his death, for reconciliation is made by his blood, *Col.* 1. 20. and thus by the admirable myſtery of his deepe wiſdome, he hath found a meanes to make the ſeeming oppoſite attributes of juſtice

juſtice and mercy, to kiſſe each other ſo as wee are ſaved, and yet his infinite juſtice hath full content, for how could his hatred of ſinne appeare more gloriouſly then in puniſhing it upon his owne onely beloved Sonne. And therefore worthily hee is called our peace, for he is that great peacemaker, offering himſelfe up, and us in him as a ſweet ſmelling ſacrifice acceptable to God, being then thus brought neere to God, to keepe and maintaine this neereneſſe ſo, as nothing may ſeparate us again, he hath put into us his owne ſpirit, ſo as we are one ſpirit with Chriſt; and by that ſpirit he worketh in us.

and by us by that ſpirit, we heare, read, pray, and as by the ſoule in us, our bodies doe live, breath, and move, and the like, ſo he maketh his ſpirit to move in us, to a holy Converſation, and a heavenly life being thus made partakers of the divine nature, and this ſanctifies us to a holy Communion with God, and therefore the Apoſtle prayes 2 *Cor.*13.14. *The grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, the love of God the Father, and the Communion of the holy Ghoſt be with them.* That is, for a fuller manifeſtation of the love of God, in ſending Chriſt, the grace of Chriſt in comming to us, and the Communion of the holy ſpirit,

ſpirit, becauſe by it we are made to live a holy life, and to communicate with God, and thus the three perſons in Trinity conſpire together in reducing man backe againe, to be more neare to God.

Now for uſe of this, it *ſhould teach us how to thinke on God*, not as all juſtice and power, hating ſinne and ſinners, but as a Father, now laying aſide terrible things that may ſcare us from drawing nigh to him, and as a God ſtooping downe to our humane nature, to take both it and our miſerable condition upon himſelfe, and ſee our nature not only ſuffering with Chriſt, but riſing, nay now *Uſe.*

now in Heaven united to God, and this will feede the ſoule with ineſtimable comfort.

Uſe. 2. Secondly, labour to be more neere to him, *by the more full participation of his ſpirit*, thoſe that have not Chriſts Spirit are none of his, by it we in Chriſt have acceſſe to God, and therefore the more ſpirituall we are, the neerer acceſſe wee have to the ſecrets of God, in our firſt eſtate we are altogether fleſh and have no ſpirit, in our preſent eſtate of grace, we are partly fleſh and partly ſpirit, in our third eſtate in heaven, wee ſhall be all ſpirituall, yea our bodyes ſhall be ſpirituall, 1 *Cor.* 15.44. Its ſowne na-

naturall but it ſhall be raiſed ſpiritual, and ſhall be obedient to our ſoules in all things, & our ſoules wholly poſſeſſed and led by the ſpirit of God, ſo as then God ſhall be all in all with us, and for meanes hereunto. Firſt, *labour to be converſant in ſpirituall meanes*, as in hearing of the word, receiving of the Sacraments, God annexeth his ſpirit to his owne ordinances, and thence it is that in the Communion with God in the ordinances, mens apprehenſions are ſo inlarged, as they are many times ſpiritually ſicke, and doe long after the bleſſed enjoying of Gods preſence in heaven, but take heed how we

Meanes of Communion with God.

1. Meanes. Be converſant in the ordinances.

we come, thinke what we have to do and with whom. Come not without the garment of Chriſt, and its no matter how beggerly wee are, this foode is not appointed for Angels, but for men. And come with an humble heart as *Elizabeth*, who am I that (not the mother of my Lord) God himſelfe from heaven ſhould come to me.

2. Meanes. Converſe with thoſe that draw neere to God.

Secondly, *Converſe with thoſe that draw neere unto him*. God is preſent where two or three are aſſembled in his name, warming their hearts with love and affection, as its ſaid of the two Diſciples going to *Emaus*, *Did not our hearts burne within us while we walked in the*

the way, and conferred of the ſayings, &c. Oh its a notable ſigne of a ſpiritual heart to ſeeke ſpiritual company, for when their hearts joyne together, they warme one another, and are hereby guarded from temptations, nay the wicked themſelves in Gods company will be reſtrained, *Saul* a wicked man amongſt the Prophets will prophecy now, if by good company carnall men themſelves, doe in a manner draw neere to God, how acceptable ought this to be to us, and how powerfull in us.

3. Meanes. Be much in prayer.

Thirdly, and *eſpecially be much in prayer*, for this is not onely a maine part of this duty of drawing neere to

to God, but its a great help thereunto, God is neere to all that call upon him, for then are thoſe moſt neere to God, when their underſtandings, affections, deſires, truſt, hope, faith, are buſied about God, and therefore as *Moſes* his face did ſhine with being in the preſence of God, ſo thoſe that are converſant in this duty of prayer, have a luſtre caſt upon their ſoules, and their mindes brought into a heavenly temper and made fit for any thing that is divine, I could wiſh that men would be more in publike Prayer, and that they wold not forget private Prayer, if ever they intend the comfort of their ſoules, not only

ly hereafter, but even during this preſent life, for every dayes neceſſities and dangers in the midſt of many enemies, the Devill, fleſh, and world, ill company, and ſtrong corruptions ſhould invite us to caſt our ſelves into the protection of an Almighty Saviour, there is not a minute of time in all our life, but we muſt either be neere God or we are undone.

Fourthly, obſerve *the firſt motions of ſinne in our hearts*, that may greeve the ſpirit of God in the leaſt manner, and checke them at the firſt, give no ſlumber to thine eyes then, nor the reines to thy deſirs; Thou O man of God, flye the

4. Meanes. Obſerve & checke the firſt motions of ſin that may grieve the ſpirit.

the luſts of youth, the beſt things in us, if they come from nature in us God abhorres, rebuke therefore the firſt motions, before they come to delight or action; God abhorreth one that gives liberty to his thoughts, more than one that falleth into a grievous ſin now and then through ſtrength of temptation, and ſuch ſhall finde comfort ſooner of the pardon of their ſinnes, for they cannot but ſee their offences to be haynous, and ſo have ground of abaſement in themſelves, but the other thinking of the ſmalneſſe of their ſinnes, or at leaſt that God is not much offended with thoughts, doe

fill

fill themſelves with contemplative wickedneſſe, and chaſe away the ſpirit of God, that cannot indure an uncleane heart, we muſt therefore keepe our ſelves pure and unſpotted of this preſent world, *for the pure in heart ſhall ſee God*, and without holineſſe none ſhall ever ſee him; the leaſt ſinne in thought, if it be entertained, it eates out the ſtrength of the ſoule, that it can receive no good from God, nor cloſe with him, ſo as it performeth all duties deadly and hollowly; *Pſal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my prayer*, and hence it is that ſo little good is wrought in the

the ordinances of God; men bring their luſts a long with them, they neither know the ſweeteneſſe of the preſence of Gods ſpirit, neither doe they deſire it: its a true rule that every ſinne, hath intrinſically in it ſome puniſhment, but its not the puniſhment that is the proper venome or poyſon of ſinne; but this that it hinders the ſpirit of God from us, and keepes us from him, & unfits us for life or for death: but this inward divorce from Gods ſpirit, above all its the moſt bitter ſtabbe that can befall any one that ever taſted of the ſweeteneſſe of Chriſtian profeſſion. Now for the better keeping of our thoughts,

thoughts, we ſhould labour to watch againſt our outward ſences, that by them thoughts be not darted into us, *the eyes of the foole, are in the corners of the world*, ſaith the wiſe man, and therefore let men profeſſe what they will, when they goe to lewde company and filthy places, where corruptions are ſhot into them by all their ſences, they neither can take delight to draw neere to God, nor can God take any delight to draw neere to them, *Dina* that will be ſtraying abroad, comes home with ſhame, and that ſoule that either ſtraggles after temptations, or ſuffereth temptations to enter into it, uncon-

controuledly, both wayes doth grieve God, and that good Spirit that ſhould leade us to him. As for ſuch as live in groſſe ſinnes, as lying, blaſpheming, ſwearing, drunkenneſſe, adultry, or the like; let them never thinke of drawing neere to God, they muſt firſt be civilized before they can appeare to be religious, and they contrarily proclaime to the whole world, that they ſay to God, *Depart from us, for we will none of thy wayes*, ſo as God drawes away from them, and they draw away from him.

5. Meanes. Be in the place God ſet us.

Fiftly, *be in Gods walkes and ordinances in a courſe of doing good*, in our Chriſtian or civill calling, ſanctifi-

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ed by prayer and a holy dependance upon God for ſtrength, wiſedome, and ſucceſſe, goe not out of thoſe wayes wherein hee gives his Angels charge of our perſons and actions, and what ever we doe, labour to doe it with perfection, as our father in heaven is perfect.

Sixthly, *obſerve Gods dealing with the Church*, both formerly and now in theſe dayes, and how he dealeth and hath formerly dealt with our ſelves, that from experience of his faithfulneſſe to us, we may gather confidence to approach nigh him at any occaſion, Gods Workes and words doe anſwere one another, hath

6. Meanes. Obſerve Gods dealing with his Church.

hath he ſayd, and ſhall hee not doe it? he is alwayes good to *Iſrael*, obſerve therefore how all things worke together for thy particular drawing nigh unto him, for if all doe worke together for thy good, then it muſt be of neceſſitie for thy drawing neere to God, and drawing thee away from this preſent world, and obſerve how thy ſoule anſwereth the purpoſe of God, how thy affections are bent, and ſo how all comes out for thy benefit at laſt: ſee God in afflictions imbittering ill courſes in thee, in thy ſucceſſe, in thy affaires, incouraging thee, and thus walke with God, but evermore thinke

thinke of him as of a Father in covenant with thee.

Seventhly, *labour to maintaine humility*, having evermore a ſence of thy unworthyneſſe, and wants, and continuall dependance on God, and thus humble thy ſelfe to walke with him; hence the Saints in Gods preſence call themſelves duſt and aſhes, as *Abraham and leſſe than the leaſt of Gods mercies*, as *Iacob*, *God is a conſuming fire*, and will be ſanctified in all that come nigh unto him, he will give grace to the humble, but beholdeth the proud a farre off (as they looke on others) *Iam.* 4. 8. *draw neere to the Lord, and he will draw neere to you*, humble your

7. Meanes. Maintaine humility.

your ſelves under the mighty hand of God, and he will lift you up, he that lifteth himſelfe up, maketh himſelfe a god, and God will indure no corrivalls. Contrarily he dwelleth in the heart of the humble, *Eſa.* 66. 2. and in the Pſalmes *an humble and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not deſpiſe*, but pride he abhorreth as an abomination of deſolation.

8. Meanes. Labour for ſincerity.

Eightly, *labour for ſincerity in all our actions*, what ever we do to God or man, doe it with a ſingle eye, reſolute to pleaſe God, let men ſay what they will, *a double minded man, is unſtable in all his wayes*, and what is a double minded man, but

but one that hath one eye on God, another on a by-reſpect; if religion faile him he will have favour of men or wealth, yet would faine have both, for credit ſake, ſuch are groſſe tempriſers, and in time of temporizers will appeare that their religion ſerves but for a cloak to their vilde hypocricy, this God loathes, and will ſpew them out.

Ninthly, *obſerve the firſt motions, of Gods ſpirit*, and give diligent heede to them for by theſe God knockes for entrance into the heart: *Rev.* 3. *Behold I ſtand at the doore and knocke*, God is neere when he knockes, when he putteth inclinations into the heart, and

9. Meanes. Heede the firſt motions of the ſpirit.

I ſharp-

ſharpeneth them with afflictions if then we ſtoppe our eares, we may ſay the kingdome of God was neere unto us, but if he once ceaſeth knocking, our mouthes ſhall for ever bee ſtopped, and for this reaſon it is that ſo many live dayly under the meanes, and yet live in vilde courſes as if God had determined their doome, they reſiſted the firſt motions and cloſe with their luſts, and ſo God pronounceth a curſe, make this peoples heart fat; on the contrary thoſe that will open to God while he continues knocking, God will come in and make an everlaſting Tabernacle in them, and ſup with them.

Laſtly,

10. Meanes.

Laſtly, *take up dayly controverſies that doe ariſe in us through the unconſtancy of our deceavable hearts*: repentance muſt bee every dayes worke, renewing our covenant, eſpecially every morning and evening, repaire breaches by confeſſion, and conſidering the croſſeneſſe of our hearts, commit them to God by prayer; knit my heart to thee that I may feare thy name.

To teach us that thoſe that thus draw neere to God are the wiſeſt men.

A third uſe of this doctrine is of inſtruction, and firſt to teach us *that a Chriſtian that thus draweth neere to God is the wiſeſt man*, he hath Gods Word, reaſon, and experience, to juſtifie his courſe, he is the wiſeſt

man that is wiſe for himſelfe, the Chriſtian feeles it, and knowes it, and can juſtifie himſelfe, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *Paul* ſuffered and was not aſhamed, why? *I know* (ſaith he) *whom I have beleeved*, let men ſcorne, I paſſe not for mans cenſure, they ſhall never ſcorne me out of my religion, and for them, the ſcripture that can beſt judge, calls thoſe wicked men fooles, for they refuſe God who is the chiefeſt good, and ſeeke for content where none is to be found: Contrarily, if we doe affect honour, or riches, or pleaſure, God is ſo gracious as in religion he gives us abundance of theſe, in God is all fulneſſe,

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in Chriſt are unſearchable riches, in God everlaſting ſtrength, and his favour is better than the life it ſelfe; *Ahithophel* was wiſe, but it was to hang himſelfe; *Saul* a mighty man, but to ſhed his owne blood; *Hamans* honour ended in ſhame.

Secondly, hence *we may learne how to juſtifie zeale in religion*, if to be neere God be good, then the neerer him the better, if religion be good, then the more the better, if holineſſe be good then the more the better, its beſt to excell in the beſt things, who was the beſt man but Chriſt, and why? he was neereſt the fountaine, and who are next but the Angels, and why? be-

2. It teacheth us to juſtifie zeale in Religion.

cauſe they are alwayes in Gods preſence; and who next but thoſe that are neereſt to Chriſt, if we could get Angellicall holineſſe, were it not commendable? and therefore it ſhould ſhame us to bee backward, and cold, and to have ſo little zeale, as to be aſhamed of goodneſſe as moſt are.

3. Teach us not to breake with God for any creature.

Thirdly, *this ſhould teach us that a man muſt not breake with God, for any Creatures ſake what ever*; its good to loſe all for God: Why? becauſe we have riches in him, liberty in him, all in him: a man may be a King on earth, and yet a priſoner in himſelfe, and if we loſe any thing,

thing, though it bee our owne life for God, we ſhall ſave it, if we be ſwallowed up of outward miſery, the ſpirit of God that ſearcheth the deepe things of God, paſſes and repaſſes, and puts a relliſh into us of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, taſte and ſee how good God is, *Pſal.* 37. 8. how excellent is thy loving kindneſſe which thou haſt layd up for them that feare thee, how precious are thy thoughts to me O Lord, thou haſt the words of everlaſting life, whether then ſhall I goe ſayd *Peter*, when he felt but a ſpark of the Divine power.

4. *Uſe of tryall.*

A further uſe of this Doctrine ſhall be an uſe of *try-*

1. If we draw neere to God, we will deſire increaſe of Communion.

all; to know whether we draw neere to God or not: firſt therefore where this is, there will be *a further deſire of increaſe of Communion with God*, the ſoule will not reſt in meaſure, *Exod.* 33. *Moſes* had divers entertainements of God, hee had ſeene him in the buſh, and in mount *Sinai* and many other times, but not contented herewith, hee would needes ſee Gods face, and thus *Abraham*, he gathers upon God ſtill more and more ground in his prayers, *What if fifty, what if forty, what if twenty, what if tenne righteous be found there*, ſaith he, and *Iacob* how often was he bleſſed whom *Iſaac* bleſſed, when

when he was to goe into *Paran*, when he was there at his returne, and yet when he comes to wraſtle with the Angell, *I will not let thee goe till thou bleſſe me*, and the reaſon is, becauſe as God is a fountaine never to be drawne dry, ſo is man an emptineſſe never filled, but our deſires increaſe ſtill till we arive in heaven, and therefore the more wee worke, and the more we pray, and the more good we doe, the more doe our deſires increaſe in doing good.

2. The neerer we are to God we will be the more humble.

Secondly, *this will appeare in abaſing or humbling our ſelves*, as it was with *Abraham* the more neere God is, the more humbly

he fals on his face, and confeſſeth he is but duſt and aſhes; the Angels in token of reverence doe cover their faces, being in the preſence of God; and its an univerſall note, that all ſuch as draw neere to God, they are humble and reverent in holy duties, & therefore proud perſons have no Communion with God at all.

3. We admire heavenly things the more.

Thirdly, *the nearer we are to God, the more we admire heavenly things*, and count all others droſſe and dung, as Saint *Paul*, *Phil.* 3. When the Sunne riſeth the ſtarres they vaniſh; and thoſe that doe not admire the joy, peace, and happineſſe of a Chriſtian, are unacquain-

quainted with drawing neere to God.

4. We ſee ſinne.

Fourthly, *when we have a ſence and ſight of ſinne, then wee may truely be ſayd to draw neere*, and to bee neere to God; for by his light, are our eyes enlightned, & we are quickned by his heate and love, and hence we come to ſee little ſinnes great ſinnes, and are afraide of the beginnings of ſinne, *Lord purge me from my ſecret ſinnes, create in me a new heart, Oh let the thoughts of my heart, be alwayes acceptable in thy ſight*, and thoſe that make no ſcruple of worldly affaires on the Lords day, of light ſmall oathes (as they call them) or

or of corrupt diſcourſe, they neither are nor can draw neere to God.

5. We have the more reſt.

Fifthly, *the neerer wee draw to God, the more is our reſt. Come unto me all you that are weary and heavie laden, and you ſhall finde reſt unto your ſoules, Pſal.* 16. 4. the ſorrowes of thoſe that worſhippe another God ſhall bee multiplyed, and therefore they may well maintaine doubting, and therefore ſuch if they be in their right minds never end their dayes comfortably.

6. They flee to God in diſtreſſes

Sixthly, in all *diſtreſſes thoſe that draw neere to God will flye to him with confidence*, but a guilty conſcience is afraide of God, as of

of a creditor that oweth him puniſhment, or that intendeth to caſt him into perpetuall priſon; and as a childe will in all his wrongs, goe and complaine to his father, *Romans.* 5. ſo if wee have the ſpirit of ſonnes, we have acceſſe to God, and peace with God, and can come boldly to the throne of Grace, to finde helpe in him at neede.

7. Drawing neere to God frees from feare.

Seventhly, *he that is neere to God, is neither afraide of God, nor of any creature*, for God and he are in good tearmes; in the midſt of thundring and lightning *Moſes* hath heart to goe neere, when the *Iſraelites* flye,

flye, and ſtand farre off: *Pſal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is the ſtrength of my ſalvation, of whom ſhall I be afraide,* *Pſalme,* 112. 7. *He that feareth the Lord, will not be afraide of evill tydings.* But contrarily on the wicked there are feares, and ſnares, and pits, they feare where no cauſe of feare is, and when God revealeth his terrour, indeede then *Eſay* 33. 14. *the ſinners in Sion are afraide, and the hypocrites that make ſhew of holineſſe are ſurpriſed with fearefulneſſe, who amongſt us ſhall dwell with devouring fire, and who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?*

8. It increaſe love to ſpiritual exerciſes.

Eightly, *the nearer wee are*

are to God, the more in loue we will be with ſpirituall exerciſes, the more neere to God, the more in love with all meanes to draw nigh to him; as of bookes, ſermons, good companie: my delight is in the excellent of the earth, *oh how I love thy law, how beautifull are thy dwelling places, oh Lord of hoſts.*

Ninthly, he that is neere God, *is ſo warmed with love of him, ſo that he will ſtand againſt oppoſition*, and that out of experience, *He that delivered me out of the paw of the Beare, will deliver me from the hands of this uncircumciſed Philiſtine*, and out of his experience he wil be incourrag'd to uſe the ordi-

9. It increaſe love to God.

nances

nances of God, he will pray becauſe he hath found the ſweeten-ſſe of it, he will be in good Company becauſe he findes it preſerves him in a better temper for the ſervice of God, hee will heare the word ſpiritually and plainely laid open to him, becauſe he hath found the power of it in renewing and quickning his affections and deſires, and thoſe that doe not draw nigh to God, do either loathor at leaſtare indifferent to daies, to companies, to exerciſes, al are alike to them, and they wonder at the niceneſſe of Chriſtians that take ſo much labor & paines, when as a man may goe to heaven at an eaſier rate by much, and on the

the contrary, Chriſtians do as much wonder at them, that they are ſo careleſſe, when as few are called, and of thoſe that are called, ſome heare the word but receive it not, ſome receive and in time of triall fall off, ſo as not the third part of hearers are ſaved. What *then now remaineth but that wee ſhould be incouraged unto this duty of drawing neere unto God.* Wee ſee how Scripture, reaſon, and experience, prooves that it is a thing neceſſary and profitable, and thoſe that are farre from God ſhal periſh, and thoſe that goe a whoring from him he wil deſtroy, as its in the foregoing verſe, thoſe that are either

ther of a whoriſh judgement, or affections after luſt or covetouſneſſe or the like, God will curſe; for all ſinne is but adultery or defiling of the ſoule with the Creature; and therefore labour for chaſte judgements and affections, love him, and feare him above all, and this is the whole duty of man, and uſe other creatures in their owne place, as creatures ſhould be uſed; we know not what troubles and difficulties wee ſhall meete with ere long, wherein neither friends nor all the world can doe us any good, and then happie ſhall we be if with a comfortable heart, we can goe to God with *David*, *Pſal.*

22. 11. *Be not farre from me for trouble is neere, and there is none to helpe*: if God bee then farre off from us, when trouble is neere to us, wee may goe and cry to him, but his anſwere will be *Prov.* 1. 31. *You ſhall eate the fruite of your owne way, you have ſet at nought all my counſell, and would none of my reproofe*, you would not draw nigh to me, you ſhall now call and ſeeke to me, but now you ſhall not draw nigh to me, you ſhall not finde me: what then can our friends doe, what can the whole world then ſupply to us, when ſickneſſe comes as an armed man, and death as a mighty Gyant, againſt whom

whom is no reſiſting, but will we or nill we, away we muſt begone: then to have a God nigh us, to whom we may goe as *Peter* did in the ſtorme, *O maſter ſave me I periſh*, then to have a friend in heaven, who can for the preſent guide us by his counſell, and inſtruct us againſt Sathans wiles, and our deceiveable hearts, and be a ſafe guard to us in the fire and in the water, in the dungeon and when wee are in the greateſt depths of miſery, to outward ſenſe, though in death, in the ſhaddow of death, and in the vally of the ſhaddow of death; yet can ſend us ſuch cheereſull remembrances of his love,

as

as the cloud ſhall be ſcattered, the ſhaddow taken away, and death an enemy ſhall bee a friend, nay a friendly meeting betweene God and the ſoule, ſo as the ſoule ſhal triumph in death, and ſhall delight to dye and deſire it, *Lord now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for* (by the eye of faith) I have *waited for thy Salvation:* I ſay then will the ſweeteneſſe of this eſtate of drawing neere to God, be manifeſted to us, and then ſhall we not repent of any labour or traveile ſpent in our life time, in the attaining of ſuch a condition.

FINIS.

THE RICH PEARLE.

MATTH. 13.45,46.

And againe, the Kingdome of Heaven is like unto a merchant man ſeeking goodly Pearles, &c.

SAint *Paul* expreſſeth in the Epiſtle to the *Philippians* what this parable typifies, there he teaches all is dung in compariſon of

Chriſt, here the ſpirit teaches that all muſt be parted with, to gaine this pearle ſpoken of in this place, and as Saint *Paul*, ſo Chriſt, his thoughts were all heavenly, he came from Heaven, and while he was on earth, his thoughts and ſpeeches ſhewed whence he was, all his diſcourſe is of Heaven, ſometime in plaine doctrine otherwhiles in parables, as in this Chapter is manifeſted, comparing the Kingdome of Heaven to a ſower, *ver.* 24. To a graine of muſtard ſeed, *ver.* 31. To leaven *ver.* 33. To an hidden treaſure *ver.* 44. and in theſe two verſes, to a merchant of pearles, beginning the verſe with the word

word *Againe*, to ſhew that he inſiſted upon the former matter, his love to mankind *admits of no wearineſſe in repetitions*, and often inculcating the ſame things, thereby to worke a ſtrong impreſſion in our mindes, as knowing that they are above our underſtanding, and that we are indiſpoſed to them naturally, and it ſhould teach us *not to bee weary of hearing the ſame things*, as alſo Saint *Paul* admoniſheth us, in telling us it is ſafe for us, *Philip.* 3. 1. though in it ſelfe it be tedious to the Miniſter, and indeed its the unhappineſſe of Miniſters to be often preſſing the ſame thing, and yet they muſt not neglect

it, ſeeing Chriſt ſtooped ſo low to take up this duty, for the benefit of our ſoules.

In the nēxt place obſerve *Chriſt teacheth by Parables*, helping the ſoule by the body, the underſtanding by the ſence, teaching us out of objects of our ſence, to raiſe up our ſoules to Divine meditations, ſo as the ſoule is beholding to the body, as well as the body to the ſoule, though not in ſo eminent a meaſure. But it may be queſtioned, are not parables hard to bee underſtood? I anſwere, its true if they be not unfolded they are hard, but if they be once manifeſted they are of excellent uſe, and

and like the cloud, light-ſome towards the *Iſraelites*, to give to them light; but towards the *Egyptians* a cloud of darkeneſſe. And carnall men are earthly in heavenly matters: and on the contrary, thoſe that are ſpiritually minded, are heavenly diſpoſed in earthly matters, and it teacheth us our duty, *viz. to be of a holy diſpoſition in the uſe of theſe outward things*, for the creatures have a double uſe, one for the good of the body, another for the good of the ſoule, as *Rom.* 1. The godhead is ſo manifeſt in the creature, as it alone is ſufficient to leave us without excuſe, and therefore as we dayly uſe them, ſo

Opening the Parable.

The Kingdome of heaven what.

ſhould our ſoules by way of meditation, make them as a ladder to aſcend on high; But for the parable it ſelfe, in it firſt we will expound the tearmes & then paſſe to the obſervations, and firſt by the *Kingdome of heaven*, is meant ſometime the company of men that are under Chriſts regiment, that acknowledge him for their king, as wee ſay its not the walls that make the Citty, but the body of men united and governed by one law, cuſtome and priviledge; but here it may be well taken for the bleſſed eſtate that doth belong to ſuch, together with the meanes that bring them to this eſtate, & the

the prerogatives annexed to it, as peace, joy, grace, and the like, but moſt eſpecially for the glorious eſtate of a Chriſtian begun here, and perfected hereafter, for where this is ſuppoſed it doth ſuppoſe the meanes and prerogatives alſo formerly ſpoken of, and therefore if we *ever thinke to come to heaven, it muſt be begun here in this kingdome of grace*, and hence is it that the word is ſometimes called the *kingdome of heaven*, for Chriſt will rule in thoſe here by his ſpirit, that thinke to reigne with him hereafter. And it ſhould alſo comfort thoſe that finde in them the firſt fruites of this kingdome,

Note.

for they ſhall aſſuredly have the harveſt at length, feare not tryalls nor troubles, grace once begun, thogh as a grain of muſterd ſeed, wil not leave growing till it ends in glory; and yet it muſt be ſuppoſed, that our *carriage here muſt be as if we were in heaven*, our thoughts muſt ſute with our eſtates, we are kings our thoughts muſt be high; & *take heed how we diſeſteeme the Goſpel*, if we neglect it, we neglect the kingdome of heaven, if we contemne it, we refuſe alſo and contemne grace, and ſo diſclaime all title to heaven, it is further ſayd that it is with this *Kingdome*, as with a merchant man that ſeekes pearles, *this merchant is eve-*

ry

ry Christian, our life is a continuall merchandizing of some thing, and taking other in exchange, *and taking such as are better than the things we part with*, else wil our trade be soone at an end, and we never a whit the better, and therefore the Christians (like a good merchant) trades for pearls, a Christian life therefore is a life of trading, a ventring life, and therefore a life of danger, being ever as it were in danger of death, (as the merchant is at sea) yet ever sure that his God will not forsake him, but assist him and defend him off from the rockes of Sathans temptations, and accusations, and terrour of

conſcience, and deſpaire on the one ſide, and from the alluring waves of the world, that he falls not into that dangerous whirle poole on the other ſide; *his life is alſo a life of labour*, labouring in his particular calling with faithfulneſſe, having ever an eye on his other calling, and thus by an holy uſe of the things heere below, his minde is ever climing up the hill, to ſee the end of all his labour, and to aime at it in all his thoughts words and deedes; and as its a life of of labour, ſo its not fruitleſſe, it is for pearles of honour, pleaſure, or profit, but the ſcripture counts theſe but durt and thornes, although

although in our childiſh eſteeme we count them goodly jewells, being indeede but counterfet glaſſe, yet *there is a ſort of a higher ſpirit, that doe indeede ſeeke* a pearle, having purpoſes to ſerve God, but they in ſeeking meete with counterfeits, with falſe teachers that make glorious ſhewes yet indeed are but mountibanckes who ſhew and ſell them much counterfeit pearle, and thereby ſeduce them from the right way: but ſuch as God intends good unto hēe informes them by his ſpirit, that this is not the right Orient peare, and this they finde by experience, it quiets not their heart nor their conſciences

ences it gives them no comfort, briefely it ſtands them in no ſtead, nay it hinders them, and this makes them caſt about a new for other treaſure, (as the woman of *Samaria*) a *Meßias* that will ſhew them all things, and at length they meete with this rich and precious pearle; and thus *Auſtin* a *Manichee* at the firſt fell to doubting of his eſtate, and at length met with God indeede, which hee formerly ſought in vaine, to proceede, this merchant ſeekes, then findes, then ſells, all to get the pearle that hee thus found; wherein wee will ſhew what this pearle is; Firſt therefore *by this Pearle*

is

is meant Christ Iesus, with all his graces and prerogatives derived to us, by the meanes of his ordinances: Christ is the great Pearle, al the rest are pearles but no otherwise than as they leade us to Christ, the peereleſſe pearle. Now we know that *pearles are bred in ſhell fiſhes*, of a Celeſtiall humour or dew, and like hereto was Christ, by heavenly influence formed in the wombe of the Virgin, and as pearles though formed in the water, yet originally are from the heavens, ſo the graces of Gods ſpirit are from heaven, though placed in earthly hearts: and againe *as pearles though here below, yet are like*

What this pearle is.

Christ like a pearle in diverſe particulars.

like the heavens in cleerenesse, so Christians by this gracious influence from this pearle Christ Iesus, though they live here on the earth, are more like heaven than earth wherein they arē bred, and thus is Christ also, though hee tooke the flesh of man upon him yet he hath the lustre of the Godhead, in whom all the attributes of God doe plentifully shine. Againe, *a pearle is of great valew & worth, & so Christ, one Christ of infinite valew, and therefore became a ransome for many millions that were in bondage*, so as all the whole Church hath interest in him, and every particular Christian hath such a part

part in him, as if one onely man had beene in the world to have beene ſaved by him, Chriſt muſt have dyed for him, hee was given by God to purchaſe our redemption, and not onely to purchaſe our deliverance but alſo to make us acceptable, and to fill us with other things that are good in him, we have all that we ſtand in neede of here and hereafter, all our grace and comfort ariſeth from him; in him are the treaſures of wiſedome and counſell hid, *and from his fulnes we al receive grace for grace*: Furthermore, *he is ſuch a Pearle as frees us from all ill, nay its powerfull to turne all ill to the greateſt good*, it makes life

life out of death, it makes joy out of affliction, it makes the devill our enemy to be a meanes of haſtening us to heaven. Laſtly, *this Pearle makes us good*, like the Philoſophers ſtone, it turnes every thing into gold, ſo this makes us Gods jewels, and our High-prieſt doth now in Heaven beare us in his breaſt, as the pretious ſtones that were in *Aarons* breaſt-plate, it makes us Kings and Prieſts to God, and a ſpouſe fitting for him our husband, it adorneth us with all graces, it makes all ours, and intitles us to Heaven, which we loſt in our fall.

How we may come by this pearle.

Chriſt then is this Pearle, but now in the ſecond place, *Let us ſee how we may come*

come by this pearle. We must therefore know that this pearle may be had, and we must have hope thereof, else there is no ventring for it, and therefore God to prevent all excuse, he offers this pearle in his word, the pearle is sent from heaven to come to us, the ministry layeth open the riches of Christ to make us long after him, he desires us to be good to our owne soules, to receive this pearle thus offered, he intreates us to be reconciled to God, 2. *Cor.* 5.20. O that my people would heare *Deut* 5.29. *O Ierusalem how oft would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her Chickens, Luk.* 13.31. what can wee have more

God offers it.

more, we ſee its no deſperate matter, therfore it may be had, the miniſtry though never ſo vile in account of men, yet hath made men rich 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *Yet making many rich.* In the next place *what muſt we part with*, we ſee in this text the Merchant parts with all, ſo muſt we give all that we have, and if wee have nothing, then wee muſt give our ſelves, and God will give us our ſelves againe. But farre better then we were, when we gave our ſelves to him. But what, may ſome ſay, doth God require wee ſhould forſake all indeede? I anſwer, not as the Papiſts doe, that vow wilfull beggery.

2. We muſt part with all for it.

But

But in the first place, *we should part with the estimation of all,* wee may keepe them and use them, for God gave us these things to that end, but yet let us so use them, as though we did not use them. Let them not have our chiefe affections, nor chiefe seates in our hearts. 1.

Secondly, so wee are to part with all things, *that we must have a heart prepared to part with all, if we cannot injoy them and this pearle too.* If the question be whether wee had rather have this world then Christ, we must resolve to part with father, mother, lands, yea with a mans own selfe, rather then with Christ, without him 2.

honour

honour ſhall be no honour, pleaſure no pleaſure, to us all things ſhould be dung and droſſe in compariſon of Chriſt, nay the ſufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with that glory we ſhall have, ſo as there is no proportion betweene them.

3. Thirdly, we muſt ſo part with theſe things as wee muſt bee ready *to ſell all without conſtraint to honour Chriſt in his poore members*, ſell all for ointment for Chriſts feete, part with any thing that we may ſtand for Chriſt. *Eſpecially we muſt part with all ſins*, he that retaines any one ſinne can never get this pearle, hee that keepes in his heart but one

We muſt part with ſinne eſpecially.

one beloved pleaſure, or profit of this life, let him read, pray, heare, profeſſe, never ſo much, the Devill hath him ſure by the legge, or by the wing, and as ſure as if the whole man were in his hands, for he will willingly ſuffer a man to goe to, and uſe any good exerciſes, knowing they adde to a mans damnation, ſo long as he retaines a ſecret delight and liking to any luſt, let it bē never ſo ſmall; and further, we muſt not part with ſinne onely, for every ſin hath ſome one good or other for its object, as covetouſneſſe of riches, ambition of honour and ſuch like, wee muſt therefore *ſell all, part with*

our

our affections with all their branches and objects, if they will not ſtand with Chriſt, part with honour, riches, yea our owne lives, for they are farre inferiour to this precious Pearle. Take heede of reſervations of this one thing, this *Zoer* or that *Rimmon* as *Ananias* and *Saphira*; for who would not have Chriſt if he might have pleaſure or profit, or honor with him, no, Chriſt will have all, and therefore this is the firſt leſſon in Chriſts ſchoole, denye our ſelves our reputation, the conceipt of our owne wiſdome; in the next place *let us ſee what the gaine of this trade will be*; we ſhall thinke our ſelves no loſers

we

we ſhall have Chriſt, and with him all things; what we give to him, he will returne backe, if they be fitting for us, and with them he will give us grace to uſe them, teaching us to want and to abound, and when we are come to give all for this pearle (though indeede we have nothing here at all but onely in our owne eſteeme) Chriſt will bee worth all to us; witneſſe *Moſes* that choſe to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, before the pleaſures of *Pharaohs* Court, and therefore Chriſt in this life, promiſeth a returne of a hundred fold, which conſiſteth in aboundance of comfort, to our full ſatiſfaction

faction & content which all the world cannot give, and that makes all things here to be *vexation of ſpirit*, and therefore *David* when hee was a King, counted the teſtimonies of God better than gold, and Saint *Paul* counted theſe things here not withſtanding his many priviledges to be droſſe and dung and loſſe in compariſon of Chriſt: *And it ſtands on Gods honour, not to make us looſers*, when we trade with him, if we part with riches, pleaſures, and honours, life, world, we ſhall have better riches, better and more induring pleaſures and honours, eternall life, and a new heaven, and a new earth, where-

wherein dwelleth righteouſneſſe, if we part with theſe for Conſcience ſake, whence *we may learne who are the true rich men*, even the Chriſtian, that hath abiding riches that will continue with him ſo long as his ſoule continueth, and ſuch riches as make us good and acceptable in Gods eſteeme, that in our extremities will ſtand us in ſtead, ſupporting and commending us to God, and in death doth not forſake us, but goes with us to heaven; but a worldling walkes in a vaine ſhaddow, and diſquiets himſelfe in vaine, in heaping to himſelfe riches and pleaſures, which he muſt part with, for hee

can carry nothing with him when he dyes, but a loade of ſinnes which he commits in gathering this worldly pelfe, all this gay cloathing he muſt put off when he goes to his long home; ſee in the next place *who is the right foole*, is not he that in his judgement preferreth counters before Gold, and the bables of this preſent life before that induring ſubſtance in the heavens; wee condemne *Adam*, *Eſau*, and *Iudas*, for their fooliſh choiſe, when alaſſe there is no worldling but is as ill as the worſt of them, if not worſe, if worſe may be; are there not many that ſell Chriſt for leſſe than 30 peeces, are there not

not many that caſt him away for nothing; what doth the common ſwearer and blaſphemer, but ſell Chriſt, nay caſt away him and all hope of happineſſe for a meere preſumptious daring of God, and the beſt worldling ſels Chriſt for a very thing of nought, a toy, a pleaſure of ſinne, or a little profit; ſuch ſtrong holds hath the king of this world in the hearts of the children thereof. But how ſhall we know when we have this pearle? *We ſhould examine our hearts what wee could part with for Chriſt*, many that make profeſſion of Chriſt, in this life ſhew that they affect nothing but a bare title of profeſſion, for

How we may know we have this pearle.

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How we may know we have this pearle.

their hearts tell them, they never yet could finde in their heart to denye pleasure or profit, no not any thing for Christs sake, and yet are fully perswaded they must needes have this pearle, no, no, Christ is not to be had, neither is he to be kept upon such poore easie tearmes, men *cannot serve God and Mammon.*

1. If we part with all for it.

Secondly, if wee have this pearle *we shall have a wonderfull admiration at the excellency of the valew thereof,* Psal. 84. 1. *How beautifull are thy dwelling places,* Psal. 119. 97. *Oh how doe I love thy Law.* 1 Pet. 1. 8. *Ioy unspeakeable,* and 2 Chron. 9. *Marveilous light*; what sayes the world-

2. If we admire its excellencie.

worldling, oh this or that marveilous rich man, goodly living, ſtately houſe, ancient family, are theſe things for a Chriſtian to wonder at, who intitles himſelfe to glory in the higheſt heaven; no, worldly reſpects fall downe where heaven is advanced, when *Paul* is a convert thoſe things that were formerly gaine to him, he counteth loſſe for Chriſt.

3. It works great joy.

Thirdly whoſoever hath this pearle it *workes in him a wonderfull joy above all worldly joy what ever, above the joy of harveſt*, *Zacheus* and the Eunuch rejoyced, yea in adverſities, this joy forſakes us not, it made S. *Paul* ſing in priſon, but men

will ſay who are more heavie and dejected than Chriſtians? I anſwere that Gods ſpirit appeareth not alwayes in joy, but ſometimes in mourning, for the want of the aſſiſtance of Godsſpirit, which is an evidence of a taſte and intereſt in the bleſſed eſtate of Regeneration.

In the laſt place if wee have this pearle, *our affections and ſpeeches will be buſied evermore about it*, and our whole courſe of life will ſhew that we have it: in the next place if wee have this pearle how ſhall wee improve it to our moſt advantage: firſt therefore let us be as laborious in keeping it, as Sathan is laborious in ſtri-

How to improove this Pearle.

ſtriving to deprive us of it, and to that end we are to *watch over our eſpeciall and particular corruptions, and then moſt eſpecially when the divell proffers us a good*, for we may be ſure it's to deprive us of a better good; he gives an apple, but hee lookes to deprive us of a Paradiſe, there was never man yet eſcaped from him a gainer, and therefore in ſuch temptations examine his offers by the light of ſanctified reaſon, and wee ſhall finde ēver he offers us loſſe. In the next place let us looke that *we preſerve the veſſels of our ſoules in purity*, that we may bee fit for the pearle that muſt be ſet in gold; and in the next

place, lets *make uſe of Chriſt and our intereſt in him.* If we be in bonds under ſinne, offer Chriſt to God, (O Lord) Chriſt which thou gaveſt me is the righteouſneſſe which thou canſt not but accept, ſeeing his righteouſneſſe is infinite, and thou haſt made it mine; I am a begger of myſelfe, but thou haſt made Chriſt all in all to me, to that end that thou mayſt eſteeme of us all in all to thee: O how quiet and peaceable is that ſoule that is in this eſtate! *How goodly are thy tents oh Iacob, who is like to thee oh Iſrael?* ſaved by the Lord, happy art thou: In leſſe temptations, *as afflictions, or death that King of terraurs,*

if

if that ſhould ſeaſe on us, then conſider what doe we loſe, nothing but that which we muſt on day leave of neceſſitie; if we then have laboured formerly for this invalewable Iewell, we are then moſt neere it, our ſalvation then is moſt neere even at that inſtant (while we are labouring) are we in joying our treaſure, ſhall not we be as deſirous of the rich things that grace affordeth us, as wee are of the riches of this life, if the promiſes of ſuch things doe quicken us, how much more the things themſelves. If wee bee troubled with loſſes what loſe wee? not our pearle, not grace, not our God in whom is ever ful-

neſſe of content, if he fills us with content its more then all this vaine counterfeit world can affoord us, what if wee bee robbed of pinnes, ſo long as we keepe our Iewels & hid treaſure; are we troubled with ſolicitations of Satan, are wee ſubject to be drawne away of ill company, wee ſhould reject ſuch things with ſcorne, and ſay, Avoyd Satan, your offers are loſſe to me, loſſe of peace, loſſe of comfort; the pleaſures of ſinne are but for a ſeaſon, godlineſſe is profitable to all, nay, its above all other riches, the time will come when nothing beſides it will comfort us, nay, all other things will charge us with

with greater accompt, and load us with bitterneſſe at the latter end. Let us therefore learne to be good huſbands for our ſoules, whats the glory of our nation? is it not that we have mines of this unvalueable riches, that wee have Miniſters to draw out of this deepe wel, and to reveale this pretious water of life to all, and that wee may buy without money; therefore let us take heede how wee trifle away theſe priviledges, the time will come when wee ſhall want them, and then wiſedome will laugh at us if we have not beene wiſe to lay up durable riches.

FINIS.

THE SVCCESSE OF THE GOSPELL.

LVK. 7. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

Whereto then ſhall I liken the men of this Generation? and what are they like.

CHriſt in the former verſes had commended St. *Iohns* mini-

miniſtry, and in the verſe next going afore, hee ſpeaketh of the different ſucceſſe it found in the Publicans, from that it found in the Phariſees, who rejected the Counſell of God. Now in the verſes following, hee ſhewes what ſucceſſe his owne Miniſtry had amongſtthē, &thus he doth by way of compariſon or parable. And this he brings by way of asking a queſtion, which implies admiration andindignation, both ſhewing a deepe paſſion, as it is in *Eſay*, what ſhall I do for my Vineyard, and this ſhewes in generall, *That the refractory diſpoſition of man, is a matter of indignation and of admiration*, eſpecially if we

The perverſe diſpoſition of man is matter of admiration, and indignation.

we consider what it dispiseth and whom.

First, they dispise the word of God, the saving word, the Counsell and wisedome of God, nay, Secondly, they dispise God cloathed in flesh, that was borne and dyed for their sakes, and thereby offers salvation to them, and life everlasting, yet all this to the obdurate heart of man, is as lightning that dazleth the eyes and helpes not the sight a whit, and therefore *Esa.6.* 10. the prophet is bidden to make the heart of the people fat, Go tel this people, hearing they shall not understand, &c. and therefore no mervaile if God beares indignation against such,

ſuch, *whereto ſhall I liken the men of this generation*, this generation of vipers, that are worſe then any of the generations fore paſſed, by how much they have had more meanes to be better.

VER. 32.

They are like unto Children ſitting in the Market-place and calling one to another, and ſaying, we have piped to you and you have not danced, We have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

The compariſon is to little Children, that at marriages, and times for feaſting, piped

piped and danced, and at funerals and times of mourning, did mourne and use some fitting ceremony, now there were some among them that were froward, and would neither be content with mourning nor piping, and playing, and to these Christ compares these great Doctors, the Scribes and Pharisees, a frowardgeneration, neither pleased with Saints *Iohns* austeere course of life, nor with Christs affability and meeke carriage, and thus he crosseth their proud froward disposition. For the custome it selfe, for that it is only related, and no whit censured, therefore I forbeare to speake further there-

thereof, but come to the reddition of the compariſon.

VER. 33.

For Iohn Baptiſt came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye ſay, he hath a devill.

VER. 34.

The ſonne of man is come eating and drinking and yee ſay, behold a gluttonus man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners.

God uſeth all meanes to gaine man to himſelfe.

Where obſerve Gods gracious dealing with man, he uſeth all kinde of meanes, ſen-

sendeth men of severall natures, austeere *Iohn*, and meeke *Christ*, and they use all meanes to convince the Iudgement, all methods to worke upon the memories, all reasons to worke upon the affections and wills, he turnes himselfe into all shapes to gaine wretched man unto him.

Secondly, *observe the order God useth*, first *Iohn*, then *Christ*, *Iohn* prepares the way, throwing downe hils, *O ye generation of Vipers*, Oh say they this man is two harsh, I thinke hee hath a devill, then Christ comes with blesse d, *Blessed are the poore, blessed are you that weep, &c.* So he sent the law first, then the Gospell, first,

The order God useth to gaine man.

firſt he threatens, then promiſes.

Doctrine and life ſhould ſuit.

Thirdly, obſerve that the *manner of their teaching is double, by doctrine and life, and theſe agree*, wherein obſerve it is good that life and doctrine ſhould ſuite, for *Iohns* life was auſteere and retired, his doctrine was alſo tending to beate downe the proud conceits of man; Chriſt came to all, converſed with all meekely and lovingly, and the reaſon of

Why God makes uſe of men of ſeverall diſpoſition.

Gods making uſe of men of ſevere diſpoſitions, is becauſe of the different natures of men, whereof ſome can better reliſh one nature then another, ſome love the hot and fiery nature, others delight in the meeke ſpirit, and

and though these be diversity of gifts, yet they come from the same spirit, even as the divers smels of flowers comes from the same influence, and the divers sounds in the Organs, comes from the same breath, so doth the Spirit diffuse it selfe diversly, as it meetes with divers natures, yet all tendeth to the perfecting of one worke; wee may hence therfore gather, that to converse fruitefully and lovingly, is to be preferred before austerity, and commendable above it, because it is the conversation of Christ himselfe.

And the Papists shall never be able to proove their foolish austeere vowes of

a ſolitary life, &c. to bee preferred before communication and ſocietie, unleſſe they will prove *Iohn* better than Chriſt; and againe, this ſhould teach us to moderate our ſenſures of the diverſe natures and carriage of men, as knowing that God in wiſedome hath appointed it for excellent uſe, and that all agree in the building up of the ſpirituall temple of the Church.

Doct. No meanes will prevaile where grace doth not over-power nature.

In the next place, obſerve that *where grace doth not over-power nature, no meanes will prevaile* over the obdurate nature of man; neither *Iohn* nor *Chriſt* could worke any thing upon theſe Phariſees, thus was it in the

the Wilderneſſe and *Egypt*, what admirable wonders did God worke, yet how incredulous and ſtiffe-necked were they, and the reaſon is, God gave not a heart, and in the converſion of a ſinner, there muſt be another manner of grace, then onely offering and exhortation to accept of Chriſt, nay the ſpirit it ſelfe muſt do more than exhort, for it may lay open to us many motives, tell us of Gods goodneſſe, truth and ſtrength ſealed to us, it may tell us of wrath and judgement, and on the other ſide of kingdomes, everlaſting joyes, perfection of happineſſe, yet all not worke any remorſe in the heart of man

Doct. In converſion the ſpirit muſt doe more than offer, exhort, and perſwade.

Reaſon. Man is dead in ſin.

if the ſpirit leaves him there; and the reaſon is, man is dead in ſinne by nature, and that ſtrong man having gotten the poſſeſſion, cannot be caſt out but by the ſtronger man, which muſt quicken and give power, that may change every part of the ſoule, the underſtanding, will and affections, elſe all meanes is to no purpoſe; but for to make us unexcuſable at the day of judgement. Hence therefore we may ſee the ſhallowneſſe of thoſe that conceive of the Word of God, as if it did onely perſwade the will; no it muſt alter the will and change it quite, elſe arguments are to no purpoſe: and in the ſecond place

Vſe to ſee the ſhallowneſſe of thoſe that conceive otherwiſe.

place, it teacheth us to come to the ordinances with holy hearts, begging Gods power to soften our hard and stonie hearts, and desiring him to joyne the powerfull work of his holy spirit with the outward meanes, and that his word may be like to that Word at the beginning, that no sooner commanded light, *but there was light.*

2. *Use.* To begge Gods power, when we come to the ordinances.

And lastly, it teacheth us to conceive of the Word, together with the goodnesse and power thereof, with admiration and wonderment.

3. *Use.* How to conceive of the Word.

In the next place observe (from the calumniation of the scribes) *that rebellion and opposition against goodnesse*

Doct. Opposition against goodnesse is never without shew of reason.

neſſe is never without ſhew of reaſon, and men they will never goe to hell, but they will have reaſon for it. They will countenance rebellion by defaming and ſcandalizing the people of God, and to that end they will be ſure to take things with the wrong hand, auſteere *Iohn hath a devill*, ſociable Chriſt *is a wine-bibber*.

Reaſon. And the reaſon is, the pride of man, that will not be thought ſo fooliſh as to ſpeake, or doe any thing without reaſon, and therefore when it is wanting they will feigne one in every calumniation they doe ſo: and the calumniation and ſcandall here was the greater

ter becauſe it was raiſed by the Scribesand Phariſees, the great Doctors and the wiſe Rabbies, whoſe word muſt carry ſuch credit with it, as alone to condemne Chriſt, *we would not have brought him to thee, were he not worthy of death*, and whoſe life muſt be a rule to others; *Doth any of the Phariſees beleeve in him?*

For uſe therefore of this doctrine, *Let us account it no ſtrang matter if we be traduced, diſgraced, and ſcandalized*, for it was Chriſts and *Iohns* lot, great ſlanders muſt be maintained from great men, ſuch as them that ſit in *Moſes* chayre, the Phariſees and Scribes; *Iohns* holineſſe ſhould have

I. *Vſe.* Not to count it ſtrange if ſcandalized.

procured reverence and Chriſts ſociablenes ſhould have beene rewarded with love, but its the lot of them and all Chriſtians. (*The Diſciple is not above his Maſter*) they may doe well, but muſt looke to heare ill, wicked men when they learne to thinke well, they will learne to report well.

2. *Uſe.* Let us grieve at their eſtate, and comfort our ſelves in Chriſt, who will mainetaine our cauſe.

3. *Uſe.* Thirdly, *Be innocent as Doves*, and be ever doing good, that our lives may give them the lie, and ſtoppe others from giving credit to their malicious aſperſions.

4. *Uſe.* Fourthly, *Let us looke that we*

we approve our ſelves to God, who ſhall judge us, ſtand or fall to him, and paſſe not for the judgement of man, and of ſuch as ſhall be judged themſelves.

Laſtly, *Let us take heede we take not a thing in the wrong ſenſe*, and of vaine prejudice, men are witty to lay ſtumbling blockes in their owne way to Heaven, this Preacher is too ſtrickt, that too milde, this too plaine, that too poore, like the Children Chriſt ſpeaks of here, nothing will pleaſe them. Hence in the laſt place we may learne from the example of Chriſt, that it is not ill to ſpeake ill of ill men, in caſe of apoligy, and prevention of ſcandall, 5. *Uſe.*

for Chriſts example doth warrant it, but to proceed.

VER. 35.

But Wiſdome is juſtified of all her Children.

Doct. The Goſpell have divers entertainements in the world.

From the connexion of theſe words, with the former, by this word *But*, we may obſerve, that *it is the lot of Gods truth to have divers entertainements in this world*, ſome will be Children of wiſdome, and juſtifie it, others as the phariſees will ſcandalize it, and *the reaſon is from the diverſity of mens natures* in this world, wherein are contrary ſeedes, and contrary ſervants

Reaſon.

vants to contrary Kingdomes, ſome will flocke after Chriſt, others will ſay, he deceiveth the people; yet as there is a generation of Vipers, ſo there is a generation of Children belonging to the kingdom, that ſwimme againſt the ſtreame, like the ſtars that have a retrograde motion, to the reſidue. But for the meaning of the words, by *Wiſdome* here is meant the doctrine of the *Goſpell*, not onely as it is in Bookes, but as it is in the Miniſtry; and briefely the wayes of God layd out in his ordinances and taught by weake men, all this is underſtood in this word *Wiſdome*, and this word *Iuſtified*, that is ap-

prooved and received *of her Children*, that is, of her followers, being ſuch as Wiſdome begets to a new life. In theſe words let us conſider; *Firſt, that there is a doctrine which is Wiſdome*, and this teacheth what God intends to us, and we ſhould returne unto him; this reaſon will evince that God being ſo good unto man, he ſhould have ſome thankes at his hands, and ſome acknowledgement of duty to him, by way of worſhip, which it is moſt fit God himſelfe ſhould inſtitute, and the rule hereof oyned with practice is that wiſedome here meant, for there is diverſe wiſdomes; Firſt *as it is in God*, and ſo it

The Doctrine of wiſdome, what.

is

is a depth unſearchable; *Man knoweth not the price hereof, Iob* 28.13. Secondly, there is a wiſdome communicated to Chriſt, who hath a twofold wiſdome, infinite as God, and infinite as man, and a wiſdome as he is God and man joyned together, and this is called wiſdome of union. In the next place there is a wiſdome of viſion, and this the Saints and Angels have in Heaven, and we ſhall have hereafter, and there is a wiſdome of Revelation, which is revealed in the Scripture to us by the Spirit, and this is the wiſdome meant in this place, as it is comprehended either in principles laid downe in the

the Goſpell, or in Concluſions inferred neceſſarily from them, or in our improovement of them, to the right and beſt end, which is Gods glory and our ſalvation, this is wiſdome, and called ſo here by way of *emphaſis*, ſhewing it is the *only excellent wiſdom*, which wil further appeare in theſe reſpects.

How it appeares.

1. Firſt, *it doth ariſe from a higher beginning then all other wiſdome* what ever, for it comes from Gods goodneſſe and mercy.

2. Secondly, *the matter, its a deepe myſtery*, Chriſt, God, Man, his nature, offices, and benefits.

3. Thirdly, *its more powerful* then all other wiſdome, for

for it transformes us, it makes us wiſe, and changes us from wicked, and makes us good.

Fourthly, *its better then the Law*, which was a killing letter, this gives life. 4.

Furthermore, *this wiſdome is everlaſting*, and it is ancienteſt, intended before the world was, it is alſo *unviolable*; God wil change the courſe of nature for his Churches ſake, and ſooner will he breake Covenant with the day and night then this Covenant, which ſhall be for ever, *Pſal.* 19.9. 5.

The end of it is to bring us home to God, 1 *Iohn* 1. 3. 6.

This wiſdome hath the ſame name with Chriſt, 7.

who

who is the wiſdome of the Father, he gives his power to the Word, and what reproach is done to it, he accounts it as done to himſelfe.

Uſe. To convince Atheſts that no word is like it.

This ſerves therefore to to convince the Atheiſts (who cannot chuſe but acknowledge there is a God, that it is fit the Creatures ſhould depend upon him, and ſhew it by way of ſervice, and that this ſervice ſhould be preſcribed by God rather than by man) let them know this is the wiſedome and the Word of God; no word like it in the convincing power it hath in purity and holineſſe, none ſo powerfull to transforme us from death to

to life, from nature unto grace.

Secondly, *it ſerves to exhort us all to attend upon the commands of this wiſdome*, men are admired for their deepe wiſedome in Policy, whereby they come to be great, this without grace is enmitie to God, and the devill dwells in the heads of ſuch as makes honours, ambition, or pleaſures their ſole aime, the wiſedome of Arts and Sciences goes beyond that, yet comes farre ſhort of this, that being but temporary and periſhing with the things themſelves, but this everlaſting and eternall, and indeed policie and civill learning, at the moſt doe but civilize and make

2. *Vſe.* To attend upon this Word of wiſedome.

make men morral'y wiſe, to which if nothing elſe be adjoyned, the life of ſuch is but a ſmooth paſſage to hell.

3. *Vſe.* To admire God goodneſſe in giving ſuch a world of wiſdome.

Laſtly, this ſhould teach us to conſider, magnifie, and admire at God's goodneſſe, that hath given ſuch a wiſedome to us as this, to be a lanthorne to light our way in this darke world, and to be as *Mannah* to feede us, that we faint not in the way, till we attaine to everlaſting life.

Doct. The Word able to beget.

The ſecond generall thing is, that *there are children of wiſedome, and that the Word, it is fruitfull and able to beget*, for it hath the ſpirit of God accompanying it which is fruitefull, we

we ſee the Sunne and the Raine beget hearbes, Trads makes men Tradeſmen, and Arts Artiſts, and ſhall we not thinke this wiſdome ſhould make men wiſe, and this trade make a man fitting for worke, yes verily, no wiſedome hath this begetting and operative ſpirit but this, for the law findes us dead, and leaves us dead: Againe this wiſedome is the arme of God to ſalvation, by *it we are begotten to be Sonnes of God*, by it wee are children *made like to God*, holy, pure, heavenly, begotten to his image, and therefore as children *wee ought to obey the Word* in performance of all duties, of prayer, hearing, reading,

furthermore, in *that we are ſcholers in Chriſts ſchoole, which is wiſedome it ſelfe, we may be ſayd to be ſonnes of wiſedome*, as thoſe were called the ſonnes of the Prophets that were Diſciples to them, now our teacher is a mighty teacher, its no matter for the dulneſſe of the ſcholler, this teacher can put wit and capacity where none was formerly, *Pſal.* 119. Moreover if this were not thus, then it *would come to paſſe, that there ſhould be a time when* there would bee no Church, that Chriſt ſhould be a King without ſubjects, and likewiſe a Doctor without ſchollers.

From the doctrine wee may

may obſerve therefore that thoſe that follow the beſt rule, which is Gods Word, and intend the beſt end, which is their owne ſalvation, *theſe are the moſt wiſe*, for they provide for the worſt times, as the Ante for winter, and with the wiſe ſteward they provide themſelves of friends, and like *Ioſeph* they lay up for deere yeares, theſe are wiſe that procure ſhelter for themſelves againſt all dangers, and are fruitefull in doing good.

1. *Uſe.* Who are moſt wiſe.

And in the ſecond p'ace let this perſwade us to attend upon wiſedome, bee we who we will be, a Publican, an Extortioner, a perſecuting *Saul*, this wiſedome

2. *Uſe.* To perſwade the worſt to attend the meanes.

dome *will of ſtones raiſe Children up unto Abraham.*

Doct. Children of wiſedome doe juſtifie it.

In the next place obſerve, *the Children of wiſedome doe juſtifie it*, that is they receive it, aproove it, defend it, maintaine it, for its fitting that Children ſhould ſtand for their mother, and take to heart any wrong thats done to her, and therefore the childe of wiſdome privately beleeves it and loves it, and openly, if the truth or any ordinance of God, or holineſſe of life be ſpoken againſt, hee will defend and maintaine it, yea to the death, for wiſdome though with the loſſe of all things is rich enough, ſo *Moſes* eſteemed

steemed the rebukes of Christ more then the pleasures of a Kings Court.

But must wee maintaine it so as to speake for it alwaies, and in al Companies? *Quest.*

I answere no, but when we are called to it; wisdome dwels with the prudent, and where it is, it will teach when to speake, and what, and in what manner. And the reasons of this observation are, first, its fitting *that Gods Children should concurre in Iudgment with God*, who justifies his wisdome in his Children, and admires his graces in them; *Oh woman great is thy faith!* As contrarily he doth admire the stubbornenesse of the heart of wicked men. *Answer.* 1. *Reason*

Second-

2. *Reaſon.* Secondly *wiſdome in it ſelfe is juſtifiable*, for it juſtifies it ſelfe, for it carries a juſtifying ſpirit with it, it hath a power able to change; in all eſtates it juſtifies it ſelfe, in trouble and anguiſh it comforts, yea in death, when all other wiſdome periſheth this raiſeth up, it is powerfull above the power of nature, it pulls downe the proud heart of man in proſperity.

Queſt. But it may be ſaid, if *it be thus, what neede is there that the Children of wiſdome ſhould juſtifie it?*

Anſwer. I anſwere, in reſpect of it ſelfe, it needs not our helpe to juſtifie it, but in regard of others, to draw them on to the loving and imbracing thereof,

thereof, and in respect of our selves, to manifest the truth of grace in us.

The Church also justifies it by proposing it, and declaring the goodnes thereof, by defending it and commending it, yet is it not above the Scriptures, no more then we are above the truth of God, when we are said to seale it. Children we are of the truth, and desire to be ruled by it, not to judge it, and all Children agree herein to justifie it as it is said here, *Wisdome is justified of all her Children*, though there be of divers Countries, of divers Nation and natures, yet all agree in commending and imbracing this wisdome, and

and therby are they know[n] to be Children of wiſdom, for hereby may we know what eſtate we are in, even by our carriage of our ſelves towards wiſdome, how many profeſſing to be the Children of wiſdome, doe notwithſtanding condemne it. Divers abroad, whom wiſdome ſhall not judge, but they will judge wiſdome, and are indeed the children of humaine tradition, and among our ſelves, *are there not many that reject the ordinance of God.* Is not ſay they reading of good Bookes at home, as good as going to Church; doe not ſuch confeſſe that the rivers of *Damaſcus*, are as good as *Iordan*;

Uſe. To try our eſtates by our carriage toward wiſdome.

dan, when as if ever we come from this ſpirituall *Egypt* into the land of promiſe, we muſt goe over this *Iordan*; we muſt come to heaven by the fooliſhneſſe of preaching.

Againe are there not many, *becauſe they ſee there is diverſities of religions, they will be of none*, till it be decided which is the truth, and this is the way to dye in no Religion, theſe are baſtards they cannot be children of wiſedome, for they know it not, as likwiſe they are ſuch that juſtifie ignorance, making it the mother of devotion, they profeſſe they are the children of ignorance and error, and not of wiſedome. Another ſort

there are that in word juſtifie wiſedome, ſaying it is *the Word of God; but in their life and converſation doe deny it*, let ſuch know he that lives againſt the faith, ſhall bee damned, as well as he that beleeves againſt it; good meate is commended more by eating and cheering, than by talking, if ſuch did truely beleeve the wiſedome of God, it would purifie them, and not to beleeve is madneſſe, but to live ſo as if they beleeved not, is deſperate madneſſe. The ſinner denies Gods preſence, the covetous man denies Gods providence, the deſpairing man denies Gods mercy and Chriſts merits, the

the sinner against conscience denyes Gods justice, else the terrour of the Lord would move him; yet if we see these things in us, and allow not of them, but condemne our selves for them, God will be mercifull and spare us.

2. *Use.* To proceede.

This should incourage us in the next place, to proceede on in a resolute course of Christianity, what though the wicked world laugh at us and scorne us, God the Iudge justifies us, his children justifie us, as for other men the Scripture calls them fooles, for God hath given them over to a reprobate judgement, in things that concerne a godly life;

and therfore if we be cenſured by ſuch, let us account it our Crowne.

3. *Vſe.* To move us to the juſtifying wiſdome.

Moreover this is a ground of exhortation to move us to this duty of juſtifying the ordinances and wayes of God, in life and converſation; juſtifie Chriſt to be our Saviour by relying on him, and let the juſtified ſoule juſtifie him to the world, by repairing to him, and depending on him, juſtifie God to be our father, by repayring to him in all eſtates, juſtifie truth to be the beſt riches, by eſteeming all other wiſdomes droſſe and dunge in compariſon, and let us admire the goodneſſe of wiſdome, elſe wiſedome will not

not lodge with us, let it rule in our hearts, and it will abide with us, elſe it is a ſtranger and will not tarry. In our dayes the voyce of wiſdome is heard, it uſes all meanes, it hath ſent men of all manner of converſations and gifts, of all others we are unexcuſable if we entertaine it not, and juſtifie it not in our lives and converſations.

But it will be asked, how ſhall we juſtifie wiſedome?

I anſwere, let us ſtrive firſt to empty our ſelves and ſoules of corruption, as a veſſell full of bad liquor muſt be emptyed before good can be put in, ſo we by nature are full of folly, and muſt empty our ſelves

How to juſtifie wiſdome. 1. *Direction.*

before we can be enabled to juſtifie wiſedome, and in what proportion this folly is over ruled in us, in the ſame proportion doe wee juſtifie wiſedome, for where wiſedome is, it muſt dwell largely and purely, for it ſelfe is pure, and will indure no mixture, and therefore thoſe that juſtifie themſelves in any ill courſe cannot juſtifie wiſedome, for when it once comes to croſſe him in his beloved courſe, let his words be never ſo good, his folly will diſcover it ſelfe; *How can you beleeve, when you ſeeke for glory one of another*, ſaith Chriſt.

2. *Direction.* Secondly, begge of God that hee would take away the

the vayle of our hearts, that we may know and love the best things in the best manner, that he would open to us the wonders of his law.

3. *Direction.*

Thirdly, labour that all our knowledge may be spirituall, for if it be acquired out of bookes, and not written in our hearts, in time of temptation we shall never justifie wisdome, this is evident out of the history of the Martyrs, many illiterate men stood out stifly for the truth, and justified it with their blood, when many great Clearkes gave over their profession, for when the spirit teaches, it teaches to obey, to want, to abound, and to despise the

glory of the world, ſpiritu all wiſedome brings humility, other wiſedome puffes men up with pride.

4. Direct. Fourthly, *therefore wee ſhould pray for the ſpirit of God*, that it would ſet le and ſeale truths into our hearts, and teach us to obey and practiſe the things it injoynes us.

5. Direct. Fifthly, we ſhould alſo *condemne our ſelves, and grow poore in ſpirit*, for what juſtifying is there like to that of thoſe that being abaſed by outward afflictions, are likewiſe inwardly humbled, ſo condemning themſelves they juſtifie Gods wiſedome, and therefore thoſe that either truſt to interceſſion of Saints or their

their merits, in vaine they thinke ever to come to the performance of this duty.

Sixthly, *attend we on wisdome*, for what is more excellent than it, and without it all are fooles; wise they may be for the world to get riches, while their end is condemnation, and perpetuall beggery in hell; many are wise to get high places here, and witty to get a deepe place in hell, they studdy for wisedome in the creatures, and when they dye their wisedome perisheth with them, and they want that true wisedome that should support them in death. 6 Direct.

Seaventhly, *and indea-* 7 Direct.

vour we to be rooted in it, that we may be able to ſpeake out of the power thereof in our ſoules, and to reſiſt the temptations of Sathan, with ſound reſolutions againſt them; and then when that day of Revelation of all things ſhall come, Chriſt will owne us, and juſtifie us, when the children of this world ſhall tremble to heare that truth and wiſedome condemne them perpetually, which here they hated and ſlandred.

8. *Direction.* Laſtly, in all our wants and diſtreſſes, ſo carry wee our ſelves that wee may ſhew wee have a Father to provide, a King to defend us, in our deſertions that we have a Prieſt in heaven to

make

make our peace, and in all temptations that we have a Prophet that will direct us in the right way unto heaven in spight of the malice of hell it selfe.

FINIS.

Sibbes, r.

MARIES CHOICE.

LVK. 10. 38, 39, 40.

Now it came to passe, as they went, that he entred into a certaine village, and a certaine woman named Martha received him into her house, &c.

THis History is absolute of it selfe, Christ having dispatched busi-

Sibbes, R.

buſineſſe elſewhere, went from place to place to doe good, it being his whole aime and office, and now divine providence and holy love directs him to theſe two women, who formerly had entertained him in heart, and now in their houſe, yet did he feaſt them more liberally then they could him, and yet ſo ſtudious they were in his entertainement, that they fall out in a manner about it. *Mary* ſhee ſat at Ieſus feete, knowing his cuſtome, that his lips did ever drop down ſweete ſmelling mirrhe in his gracious words, as it is *Cant.* 5. 13. And therefore ſhe forgat all other things. But to come to ſome obſervations. First,

First, from the comming of Christ to these women, *Observe, that where God hath begun grace hee will not discontinue, but will bee perfecting of it, till the day of the Lord,* directing by his providence continually for their good, and sending his servants the Prophets to that end; for Gods providence extendeth to the least things, even to the haires of our head, and to Sparrowes. The use is to teach us to endeavour to be fruitfull in communion one with another, if we professe to be lead by the same Spirit that Christ is guided with, the lips of the righteous are pleasant, and their tongues as refined silver.

Doct. God will perfect grace begunne.

Use. To be fruitfull in Communion

Hinderances of fruitfull Communion.

1. Hiud.

2. Hind.

3. Hind.

sometimes the sinne of man makes instruction unseasonable, and to swine it is pitty to cast pearles. And many times *men are deluded with a vaine dispaire of not profiting* by their speech, when no doubt if they did but trust on God in performing such duties, their exhortations or admonitions would take more effect then they looke for, as oftentimes it fals out, for in man there is naturally a desire of good and profit. *Sometimes a spirit of drynesse possesseth good men*, Christ had the fulnesse of the Spirit without measure, men have it according to their measure, & so through multitudes of occasions and businesses are overcome with a dri-

drineſſe, ſo as they can diſtil no grace as they ſhould.

Againſt theſe *wee ſhould ſtuddy and conſider beforehand what occaſions wee are moſt like to meete with*, and ſtuddy diſcourſe fit for ſuch occaſions, which wee may beſt profit by, ſtuddy for ſufficiency that we may be like full clouds, or as paps that doe paine themſelves withfulneſſe, till they be eaſed of their milke.

Meanes of fruitfull Communion.

1.

Secondly, *and lament over our deadneſſe, and begge* ſpiritual influence, that may make us willing.

2.

Thirdly, and *let all take Chriſts example for a patterne* to draw others to Heaven, and to be ever buſied in our calling.

3.

Fourthly,

Sibbes, R.

4. Fourthly, and we ſhould alſo imitate *Mary*, *be wiſe to draw from other men*, when they are not diſpoſed to inlarge themſelves, the wiſe man ſaith he is a foole that regards not the price in the hand of the wiſe. There is none but excels in one gift or other, and its *part of the honour due to ſuch to take not ce of them, and to make uſe of them*, and its unthankefulneſſe to let ſuch perſons goe without regard of thoſe gifts, many no doubt are dead, and their gifts with them, which had men been wiſe might have ſaved others much labour, and increaſed knowledge much, if they had been diſplayed to others. Furthermore

more it is ſayd that *Mary* ſate at *Ieſus* feete, implying her compoſed and ſetled demeanour, which helpes to a quiet mind and attentive heart, *But the eyes of a foole, are in the corners of the world*, which hinders attention. But *Martha* was troubled about ſerving: Marke as in this good woman *ſo in many of of her ſexe, goodneſſe troubled with paſsion*, ſhe chides with *Mary*, the grounds of it in her were either amiſtaking of Chriſts diſpoſition, whom ſhee thought looked for much entertainment, though ſhee was therein much deceived, for that Chriſt came to feaſt them, not to feaſt with them,

them, and for this ſhe is gently rebuked of Chriſt, as if he would have tould her that it concerned the glory of God, more neerely to receive and take notice of his diffuſed mercies, and God requires it rather than performance of any outward duty of love to him, but for the words.

VER. 41.

And Ieſus anſwered and ſayd unto her, Martha, Martha.

Theſe and the enſuing words containe firſt a reproofe of *Martha*; Secondly an inſtructionn of her: thirdly a juſtification of

Mary

Mary, with the reaſon thereof. In the reproofe of *Martha*, conſider the compellation, wherein obſerve the ingemmination, *Martha, Martha*; *it implyes love* that Chriſt bare to her, he calls her gently by her owne name, Chriſt ſaw in her good mixt with ill, and therefore is not over ſharpe or bitter to her; it implyes *alſo ſerioufneſſe*, and therefore Chriſt doubles her name even as *Pharaohs* dreames, two ayming at one end, argueth the thing is ſure, and as Lord, Lord, in prayer argues vehemency, ſo he reproved *Martha* for her inconſiderateneſſe, and brought her thereby more ſeriouſly to ponder what

what ſhe did: and *Chriſts example ſhould be a rule to us*, namely in our reproofes, to imitate him who had all the parts of a good reproover: and firſt we ſhould be

Directions for reproofe

1. ſure to reproove *out of love to the party*, elſe the proud nature of man will not indure it.

2. Secondly, it muſt be *done in wiſdome*, firſt adviſe, then ſpeake, elſe ſhame will returne on us, and the other will be hardned.

3. Thirdly, it muſt bē with *liberty of ſpeech*, wee muſt conceale nothing, and thus diſpoſed was Chriſt, in him was the fountaine of love & the treaſures of wiſdome, nay hee was wiſedome it ſelfe, and he tookē liber-

liberty of ſpeech, though he was entertained he doth not therefore ſell his liberty, and though we ſay hee that receives a benefit ſells his liberty, but it was not ſo with Chriſt; ſome *there are if they give entertainement to a miniſter, they thinke they are bound to ſilence,* and not to tell them of any thing they ſee amiſſe in them, and therefore it was Saint *Pauls* wiſedome, not to take the offered kindneſſe of the *Corinthians* 2 *Cor.* 12. leaſt hee ſhould be ingaged to them. Theſe things ſhould be preſidents to us, that we ſhould bee friends: upon no other tearmes *than to ſpeake what is for their good.* For ſome

O proud

proud perſons there are that thinke none friends but flatterers, let us take heede of baſe ingagements to ſuch; for *Balack* will ingage *Balaam* with gifts, if he can winne him no other way to his humour. And its reaſon that we ſhould maintain this liberty of ſpeech: *For friends ſuffer diſgrace for the folly of their friends*, he that keepes company with adulterers ſhall be defam'd, and therefore its reaſon a man ſhould have liberty of ſpeech to reproove ſuch.

Thou art carefull and troubled about many things.

Not that Chriſt miſlikes domeſticall buſineſſe, and hoſ-

hoſpitality, but by this Chriſt ſhewes his pitty of her troubleſome cares and diſtractions which might have beene paſſed over with farre leſſe burthen to her, and hereby therefore he tooke occaſion to heale her errour in judgement, who thought Chriſt came to be feaſted; when hee came to feaſt them, as alſo that he might free her from that hard opinion, that ſhe began to carry towards *Mary* her ſiſter, whom ſhe thought either negligent or proud in not helping her: Its therefore a ground to bee ſuppoſed, that hoſpitality becomes both men and women, its a part of that calling God commits to us,

and its commended to us from the example of *Abraham*, and the event of it, that he thereby entertained Angels into his houſe, & in this place its implyed under the words *care* and *trouble*, as if he had ſayd, thou doſt trouble thy ſelfe too much, and more than there is neede, giving us this leſſon, *that in things that are lawful, exceſſe is eaſie* in holy perſons, for what more lawfull than a calling? what more commendable than hoſpitality? yet in this *Martha* is too much troubled.

Doct. In things that are lawfull exceſſe is eaſie.

Reaſon. The reaſon is *becauſe there is little or no feare of ſinne*, and where there is leaſt feare there is moſt errour; and ſecuritie breeds neglect and

and therefore its the common plea, for exceſſe in recreations and apparell, is it not lawfull? yes, who denies it, but is there not a meane, nay in their calling, here may be exceſſe, for there muſt be meaſure obſerved in them, and thats the reaſon no doubt.

And againe, in *l wfull things defect in any one circumſtance* makes the thing ill thought, in it ſelfe never ſo good, and therefore reformation of the ſtate is good, but not by a private perſon, ſo here hoſpitality is good, but not when wee ſhould be hearing Chriſt ſpeake. To a good action there is required not onely that the nature of it bee 2. *Reaſon.*

good but that it bee well done in every circumſtance, for fayling many one makes it vicious.

Uſe. To watch over our ſelves in lawfull things.

And therefore *we ſhould have a principall watch over our affections, and that in lawfull things*, for good meanings doe not alwayes juſtifie actions, Chriſt was crucified, and the Martyres burnt, and the actors in it thought they did God good ſervice, and ſhall this excuſe? *Peter* had a good intent when hee would have perſwaded Chriſt from going to *Ieruſalem*, yet received no better thankes, than *get thee behind me Sathan.* Therefore let us looke in all our actions, how lawfull ſoever they be, in the matter

ter, its not enough, but they *must be lawfully done, according to the rule of the Word of God*, else its sinne to the doer, what ere his intent be.

In the next place observe from the translation of the words, which is more exactly thus: *Thou troublest thy selfe*, and true it is, that wee *bring upon our selves (oftentimes) more trouble than God layes on us*, and those that have lived any long time, if they advisedly consider of their labours past they shall finde they may thanke themselves for most of it, and in truth without Gods Spirit, we are selfe tormentors, and our errour is double

We bring on our selves more troubles than God layes.

in this kind: for *either wee pull too great burthens on us, or they being layd on us, wee make them too grievous to be borne, by our careleſſe laying them on us, or by our unhandſome and unſeemely carriage under them;* as it is in ordinary burthens, thoſe that are skilfull can carry a burthen with a great deale leſſe paine than another man can that wants skill, though it may be, he be the ſtronger.

1. *Reaſon.*

2. *Reaſon.* Secondly, and another reaſon hereof is *in our froward pettiſh natures*, an unmortified nature is like a ſore, every thing pierces to the quicke, beſides that it vexeth itſelfe.

Third'y,

Thirdly, and this is caused partly by too much passion in us, and partly by want of judgement, and ignorance, or not remembring the end and issue of them, where these causes are, there cannot choose but be such effects, in the darkenesse every thing scares us. 3. *Reason.*

Therefore let us take heede of this infirmity and never *excuse it, saying, men neede not care for me, I trouble none but my self*, for thou sinnest against God, and thou art a sinner against the sixth Commandement by selfe murther, in troubling thy selfe as well as by troubling others. 1. *Use.*

Secondly, *let us not bee* 2. *Use.*

overmuch troubled at troubles, poore ſoules are much troubled this way, if they finde but a little dulneſſe of ſpirit, then they conclude they want grace, they are none of Gods Children.

Cenſure *not your ſelves, nor vexe not your ſelves*, it made *Ionas* almoſt quarrell with God, and patient *Iob* complaine of his mother, of the day, of the night, alaſſe what hurt did they him. And if wee ſee others in this eſtate of cenſuring, vexing, or troubling themſelves, *cenſure not them raſhly*, the children of God are not alwayes alike, nor alwayes in tune, for a calme minde is a grace that God gives according to his good will

will and pleasure, and it ebbes and flowes as hee pleaseth: But to proceede in the next place, obserue *that the things of this life, meeting with a nature not mortified, are subiect to trouble it*, and the reason is, they are inferiour in themselves, empty and vaine, giving no content but bringing vexation, and are subiect to mutability, and therefore not able to giue the soule content being of an higher nature, and more constant enduring, and therefore requires comforts and contents suteable, which these things not able to afford, when they fayle (as ever they doe) the soule is vexed and offended. For

Things of this life apt to trouble unmortified nature.

Reason.

For uſe thereof wee ſhould take notice of the nature of theſe things, and take heede of μεϊμναις βιωτικαῖς troubling our ſelvs about the things of this life. For it divides and weakens the ſoule, and the dividing of a river muſt needes weaken the force of the ſtreames, and ſo *Cyrus* diverted the ſtreames of *Euphrates*, and thereby tooke *Babylon*. And the ſoule when intent upon one thing, though then it bee ſtrong, yet being turned to many things is much weakned, and the forces thereof ſcattered.

And therefore wee ſhould meddle onely with things that concerne us, and ſo much with them as is fitting.

Verſe

Verse 42. *But one thing is needefull*; Christ doth not onely reproove but he doth instruct, hee shewes the disease, and the remedy, to shew his love, and that his minde was not to gall or vex, but to heale and make peace; and this hee doth by way of information, telling her these businesses are full of trouble, and not necessary, and therefore she was not to spend her selfe in them, but turne her to that one thing which is necessary, *which is to communicate with God in the use of all sanctified meanes of grace.* It is necessary to come out of our naturall estate, and to bee setled further into Communion

nion with God, and becauſe holy meanes diſcovers our miſery, opens a remedy, workes grace in us to lay hold on Chriſt, therefore it is neceſſary alſo to attend on the meanes.

Queſt. But it may be asked, what are not meates and drinkes, cloathes and government, in a Common-wealth, are not theſe neceſſary, wherefore ſerve callings, nay this whole life is a life of neceſſities, how then is there but one thing neceſſary?

Anſwer. I anſwere, its true theſe things are neceſſary in their compaſſe and ſpheare, for this preſent life, but this life it ſelfe is nothing without a better being, and wee had better not be, then be and not

not be translated hereafter to a better life, and therefore Christ applies himselfe to these meanes, as to that which conducteth us to that better life, which is onely absolutely necessary.

But it may be urged, is not Christs righteousnesse, faith, Gods spirit, more than one, and yet are they not all necessary? *Object.*

I answere, though they be diverse, yet they run all to one end, even as many linkes make one chaine so all these tend to make a man one, that is a Christian, and therefore a wise soule considers them as one thing, and runnes over them all at one view, he considers the word and the spirit, as *Answ.*

that

that wch by working faith in him, brings him to Christ who brings him to eternall glory, and therfore he doth not heare, to heare, but to be renewed inwardly, & so to have cõmunion with Christ and to attaine to salvation; and therefore the Word is called the Kingdome of God, the Word of reconciliation, of grace, of the kingdome, for by it we are conducted thither, and therfore *Act*, 13. 46. They that did neglect the Gospell which was the power of God to eternall life, are said to neglect eternall life: *And therefore if we will ever profit by holy meanes*, consider thẽ as chained to salvation, heare the Word, and with it receive

ceive the ſpirit, and with it faith, with it Chriſt, with him heaven and happineſſe. This is the one neceſſary thing, others are but acceſſarie, and ſo we ſhould eſteeme them, what is skill in reaſoning, and not to bee able to know the ſubtle ſophiſtry of Sathan, and to what purpoſe is skill in healing the ſickneſſe of the body, and to have a ſoule ſicke to the death. Tongues are but the ſhell of knowledge, what good will deepe skill in the law doe us, if wee bee not able to make our title to ſalvation ſure, what profit in ending controverſies if we bee not able to anſwere Sathans accuſations and quarrels that

that he pickes with us. And the reaſon is, all theſe are but for this life, ſhort and uncertaine, it would make the beſt of us aſhamed, if we did but conſider how little we live to God, or our own comfort, knowing many impertinent things, and yet are ignorant of this our onely maine thing, and dye before wee live as we ſhould: but for the avoyding hereof, let us, lets obſerve ſome directions.

Directions for our carriage in the affaires of this life. 1, *Direct.*

And firſt, *conſider in every thing, what reference it hath to this one thing*, what reference it hath to grace and glory; ſo long as wee neglect this, the devill cares not what wee have, whi-

whither wee goe, in what company we are, all is one to him.

Secondly, carry our ſelves reſpectively, according to the neceſſity of the things that wee are to bee buſied about, whereof ſome are more, ſome leſſe neceſſary, according as they have more or leſſe good in them, thoſe that cannot ſtand with this maine, one thing, cut them of, for other things that are neceſſarily required for our well being in this life, as our dayly bread, our callings in theſe and the like. 2. *Direct.*

Thirdly, *take heede of faithleſſe cares, and begge wiſedome to diſpatch buſineſſe ſo as they prejudice not the maine,* 3 *Direct.*

that he pickes with us. And the reaſon is, all theſe are but for this life, ſhort and uncertaine, it would make the beſt of us aſhamed, if we did but conſider how little we live to God, or our own comfort, knowing many impertinent things, and yet are ignorant of this our onely maine thing, and dye before wee live as we ſhould: but for the avoyding hereof, let us, lets obſerve ſome directions.

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And firſt, *conſider in every thing, what reference it hath to this one thing*, what reference it hath to grace and glory; ſo long as wee neglect this, the devill cares not what wee have, whi-

whither wee goe, in what company we are, all is one to him.

Secondly, carry our ſelves reſpectively, according to the neceſſity of the things that wee are to bee buſied about, whereof ſome are more, ſome leſſe neceſſary, according as they have more or leſſe good in them, thoſe that cannot ſtand with this maine, one thing, cut them of, for other things that are neceſſarily required for our well being in this life, as our dayly bread, our callings in theſe and the like. 2. *Direct.*

Thirdly, *take heede of faithleſſe cares, and begge wiſedome to diſpatch buſineſſe ſo as they prejudice not the maine,* 3 *Direct.*

maine, and looke ſtill how they ayme at the maine end, as travailers and warriers doe unburthen themſelves of things leſſe neceſſary, ſo let us take heede of intangling our ſelves in the cares of this life, the covetous man labours for riches, others for pleaſures, that they may live ſenſually wherein they never can come to the degree of that happineſſe, that brutiſh creatures doe, that have them without care, and enjoy them without feare, but for a Chriſtian this is the whole, to *feare God and keepe his Commandements.*

4. Direct.

Fourthly, *in all buſineſſe we ſhould obſerve what the*

the maine end is, and labour to direct them to that maine end: in Baptiſme the one thing there, is the covenant, in Funeralls the one thing, is a worke of Charity, to commit the dead body to the ground, yet in theſe and ſuch like things, all the time is taken up in ceremonious preparations. In our buildings, and dwellings, we looke for good ayre, good ſoyle, good neighbours, but where is the maine? who inquireth what miniſter have wee? what meanes of Savation? tuſh, this enters not into their thoughts, and thus doe they invert Gods order: ſo in bringing up of children, men look to teach them

them to reade and to be fit for the courſe of life they intend they ſhall follow, and how to leave them enough to make them rich and great, but who deſires and endeavours to have the image of God ingraven in their hearts, and to provide an eternall inheritance for them.

5. *Direct.* Fifthly, *Every morning we ſhould conſider what is moſt neceſſary for the day*, have we renewed our covenant with God, and renewed our repentance? have we armed our ſelves by prayer againſt all occaſions of temptations? and provided to avoyde ſuch as are likely to meete with us, alaſſe, how few trouble them-

themſelves this way, what ſhall we eate, drinke, how ſhall we ſpend the time? theſe things take up the mindes of moſt, how to uphold a ſhort troubleſome life, and yet all their care cannot adde one inch to their ſtature, or change the colour of a haire, *But ſeeke thou the Kingdome of God and his righteouſneſſe*, this one thing, *and all other ſhall be added.*

And Mary hath choſen the better part, and yet cenſurd we ſee by *Maries* example, *its the lot of Gods Children, ſometimes to undergoe the cenſures of thoſe that are good*, for their forwardneſſe, and thus did *Davids* brethren cenſure *David*

Doct. The godly may be cenſured by them that are good.

David, we know the pride of thine heart, thou art come downe to ſee the battaile, but let us be comforted, for as it often fals out that we ſuffer rebuke with *Mary*, ſo wee ſhall have Chriſt to juſtifie us as ſhe had, and therefore

Uſe. *Let us reſolve with Saint Paul not to paſſe for the cenſure of man,* but remember that day when God will juſtifie thoſe that are his. Here wee paſſe through a hidden eclipſed glory, but the time will come that we ſhall be approoved, and it ſhall appeare then what we are, *Let us learne Innocency*, that though we undergoe their cenſure yet wee may not juſtly deſerve it, and then what ever men do deeme

Learne Innocencie.

deeme of us, we ſhould be incouraged to beare it, in regard our witnes is in Heaven, in our owne hearts, and in the hearts and ſpirits of good men.

But to proceed, Chriſt takes *Maries* part, and juſtifies *Maries* choice to be the beſt; in handling whereof we will lay downe in the firſt place ſome grounds that I will goe upon, as firſt that *there are diverſity of parts, and diverſity of ranckes of good things*, and of theſe ſome concerne this life, ſome concerne the other life; and of either of theſe God gives to ſome more, to others leſſe, ſome have the goods of this life in plenty, others are indued

with the gifts fitting them for a better life, and thus God ſets forth his free rule over all creatures, and his free liberty to diſpoſe them as he thinkes beſt, and God exerciſes his children in the uſe of all ſorts of things, and in diſcerning of things that differ.

2. A ſecond ground is that there is a ſpirit of diſcretion planted in man, *to diſcerne of the difference of things*, and this he is inabled to by the word eſpecially, for man hath not this wiſdome of himſelfe.

3. Thirdly, *the beſt things in our mindes muſt challenge the chiefeſt choiſe*, and firſt place in allowing them, then trying them, and laſtly chuſing

chuſing them. *The good part here meant is grace and glory*, this is that which *Mary* choſe, to heare Chriſt ſpeak for the ſtrengthning of the graces in her, and that therby ſhe might aſſure her ſalvation to her ſelfe, and grace is good; becauſe it makes us good, outward things are ſnares and makes us worſe, but grace commends us to God, all other things are temporall and death buries them, but grace and glory are in extent, equal to our ſoules, extending to al eternity, grace and the fruites therof is our owne, all other things are not ours, grace brings us to the greateſt good, and advanceth us to the true nobi-

lity of ſonnes and heires of God, and grace makes us truely wiſe, it makes us wiſe to ſalvation, it makes us truely rich with ſuch riches, as we cannot loſe: grace is ſo good, it makes ill things good, ſo as afflictions with the word and grace are better then all the pleaſures in *Pharaohs* Court in *Moſes* eſteeme. Seeing it is thus, *Let us be animated by this example of Mary*, and to that end, firſt, *begge the Spirit of Revelation*, to open our eies, to ſee the high price of our calling, the happineſſe thereof, and to get a ſence and taſte of the pleaſures thereof, that we may judge by our owne experience; for the meaneſt Chriſtian out

Dirictions how to chuſe the better part.

1. *Direction.*

out of experience knowes this to be the good part, and this it is which the Apostle prayes for, *Philip.* 1. 10. That the *Philipians* may approovë the things that are excellent, the word signifies in all sence and feeling, to approove the things that are excellent, or doe differ.

2. *Direct.*

Secondly, let us *indeavor to ballance things, by laying and comparing them together*. For comparison gives luster, and thus shall wee see the difference and the excellency of some things above others, and the sooner be able to chuse, thus did *David*, and the effect thereof was this, I have seene an end of all created

perfection, but thy Commandements are exceeding broad, or large.

3. *Direct.* Thirdly, *Labour for spirituall discretion to discerne of particulars*, this is as it were the steward to all actions, teaching what to cut off, what to adde, in all particular affaires of this life, what time and what place fitteth best, tels what company, what life, what way is the best. And when we have done this, proceed on *and make this choice*, if wee

4. *Direct.* doe not choose it onely, but stumble upon it as it were, its no thanke to us, though it be the fashion now a daies, men read the word, and goe to Church, why? not that they have by ballancing

lancing, and the ſpirit of diſcretion made choice of this as the beſt part, but they were bred up in it, and they went with Company, and cuſtome hath drawne them to it, they happen on good duties it may be againſt their wils, and this is the reaſon of thoſe many Apoſtates that fal off to imbrace this preſent world, as *Demas* did, for they not being grounded muſt needs waver in temptation.

In the next place, when we have made this choice, *we muſt reſolve with a deliberate reſolution, to ſtand to this choice*, its not enough to make an offer, or to cheapen as wee ſay, but come with reſolution to buy, to *5. Direct.*

chuſe ſo *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 30, 31. *I have choſen the way of truth; and have ſtucke to thy ſtatutes*, and *ver.* 57. *I have ſaid*, that is, ſet down with my ſelfe, *that I would keepe thy words*, for the *will* rules in our ſoules, if wee be good our will is good, there are many wicked men that underſtand and are perſwaded what is beſt, but for want of this reſolution and will, they never make this determinate choice; and many raile at good men and perſecute them, let ſuch know, that God will not take men by chance, if they chuſe the worſt part, they muſt looke for to reape the fruite of their choice, aſſuredly God will not bring a-

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ny to Heaven, but ſuch as have choſen it here, as the beſt part before they dye, and therefore its no matter what the world thinke or ſpeake, let us take up that notable reſolution of *Ioſhua*, *I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.*

If wee goe alone its no ſhame, but to ſuch as ſhould accompany us, let them ſtoute at us, and call us ſingular, if there be any way to Heaven, the ſtraighteſt and hardeſt, and leaſt frequented, is the right way, let them take the delightfull frequented broad way, let us with *Mary* chuſe the better part, though our choice be ſingular its *Maries* Choice. And take this

as a ſigne that we are in the right way with *Mary*, if with her we ſtil deſire more and more growth in grace and knowledge, and never think that we know enough, that we are good enough, or faithfull enough, and diligent enough in our waies.

6. In the next place, *Come we often, and ſit at Chriſts feete, as Mary* here came to the Miniſtry, *Hee that heareth you heareth mee*, ſaith Chriſt. Live under a powerfull plaine Miniſtry.

7. Laſtly, *Labour to draw on others* to this choice, by ſo much the more earneſt indeavour, by how much the more we have bin a meanes to draw them to ill heretofore, and this will ſeale up

all

all the reſt, it being a ſure ſigne of our perfect and ſincere choice.

Which ſhall not be taken away from her.

The beſt things are diverſly commended unto us, and here that good part is commended by the continuance, that it ſhall be ours for ever. The meanes indeed ſhall end, for that time muſt come, when Chriſt ſhall be all in all, but *the fruite of them ſhall continue for ever* in eternall glory, for hereby have we intereſt in the Covenant, and the promiſes which are for ever aſſured to us, and the Marriage betweene Chriſt and his Church is an everlaſting knot; wee are an immortall

mortall ſeed, the Image of God in our Soules laſts for ever, and cannot be blotted out.

Secondly, *our chooſing this good part, is an evidence God hath choſen us*, and once choſen ever choſen, our actions are but reflexe, hee choſe us, loved us, knows us, and therefore we chuſe, love, and know him, and theſe being the gifts of God to us, are without repentance on his part, and who can take this part from us: *God will not*, for hee is unchangeable, *Enemies cannot*, for as Chriſt ſaid, *My Father is greater then all*, and Chriſt is Lord of hell, and death, *what ſhall ſeparate us, not life nor death, princi-*

principalities nor powers, nothing can be able to ſeparate, by grace are wee kept to ſalvation, and by the power of God, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *ſo as we ſhall not depart from him*, *Ier.* 32. 40. *The peace of God preſerves us*, *Philip.* 4. 7. And this *ſhould comfort us, and eſtabliſh us*, wee may loſe wealth, friends, honours, health by death, thoſe that have this good part, cannot loſe it, in all the changes that poſſibly can happen.

This alſo may juſtifie a Chriſtian in his labours, its for the beſt part, that is everlaſting, that which will accompany him in death, the wicked men of this world, they labour and ſpend

ſpend themſelves in getting that, which as farre as they know, the next houre they may be conſtrained to part with, they vexe themſelves with care in getting, with care in keeping, and with vexing griefe in the parting from them.

In the next place *this ſhould Content them that are poore and deſpiſed in this world*, if they have choſen this good part, they have that which will make them amiable in Gods eyes, and this riches ſhall no man be able to take from them, and hereafter their enemies ſhal be aſhamed, when they ſhall ſee theſe poore contemned ones, to raigne with Chriſt as Princes, a thouſand

ſand yeares for evermore, and when they ſhall ſee thoſe that were the rich men here to houle in perpetuall miſery. And therefore the conſideration of *this ſhould encourage us to ſet our ſelves upon the beſt things*, and give no liberty to our Conſciences to reſt, till we have found that we have made this good choice, give our ſoules no reſt, till wee have made an habitation for the God of *Iacob* in our hearts: in death we all looke for comfort, is it a time then to looke for a choice? no, men may ſhew a deſire to repent, but few doe it in earneſt, they then ſend for Miniſters, but it is in feare, few ſuch ever die with

with Comfort, how ever God in his mercy diſpoſe of them, it muſt not be thus; if we looke for comfort in death, we ſhould now get oyle in our lamps, now get the meanes of ſalvation, be at charges for it, ſpare no coſt or labour, it will quit our coſt, and we ſhall finde it, uſe prayers privately by our ſelves, with our families, care not for the jeſting of men: he that ſhall judge the quicke and the dead, will juſtifie us in that day, and will give us that good part that ſhall never be taken from us. But how ſhall we know whether we have choſen this good part? I anſwer, we may gather divers ſignes from what hath beene

How to know we have choſen the better part.

beene ſaid, as firſt, our affections, and eſteeme will teſtifie, *what is of greateſt eſteeme with us? and beareth the higheſt place in our hearts, that thing wee have choſen*, and therefore if we love the meanes of grace principally, if we can ſay with *David*, that we love Gods teſtimonies above ſilver and Gold, and admire at the valew of them. Oh how wonderfull are thy Commandements, how ſweete, how doe I love thy law, as if we count the feete beautifull of the meſſengers of peace, and the Communion of Saints ſweete, this is a ſigne wee have made this choice, otherwiſe if wee count baſely of the Miniſtry,

1. Signe if we affect and eſteeme it.

ſtry, of the Saints as of vile perſons fit for ſcorne, when as they are precious in Gods eyes, what ever we ſay, we are proud, empty, and vaine perſons; *Peter* was of another minde, *Ioh. 6.68.* and let not men thinke becauſe Chriſt is in Heaven, they go not from him, when they turne from the word, for Chriſt ſaith, *He that heareth you heareth me, and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth mee,* and becauſe he would honour his Miniſters and Apoſtles doctrine, he did accompany it with a more large portion of his ſpirit working effectually, then his own immediate Miniſtry, as appeareth by the multitudes that his Apoſtles did convert

at

at one Sermon. In the next place, *examine we our ſelves if we be willing to part with any thing for the meanes of ſalvation*, for if we love any thing & chuſe it, rather then we will part with that, we will part with any thing, if we love the pearle, we will ſell all to gaine it, far from the humour of ſome, that will ſell the pearle, ſell the word, ſell the care of the ſoules of men, to men of corrupt converſation for filthy lucre.

2. Signe We will part with any thing for it.

Thirdly, if we have made this choice, *wee will have confidence to juſtifie it againſt all depravers*, *Michalls* ſcorn can not put *David* out of conceit with his dancing before the Arke of God, I will

3. Signe. We will juſtifie it againſt all depravers.

will be more vile then thus, ſaid he, in vaine we thinke to ſcorne uſurers out of their trade, no they find it is ſweete, their purſe comforts them againſt all ſcornes. Thus it is with the child of God, let men ſcorn, ſenſure, rebuke, they comfort themſelves as *Iob* did, their witnes is on high, and that makes them not paſſe for mens ſenſure.

4. Signe when we make it our ſtay.

In the next place, if wee *finde that when all things faile us, we doe retire our ſelves to this, as our ſtay, that our good part ſhall not bee taken away*, nor ever will faile, and thus *David*, *Pſal.* 73.26. *My fleſh and heart faile, but thou Lord art my portion for ever*; and make that uſe of it

it that *David* did, *its good for me to draw neere to God*, as a man robbed of all his money, if his Iewels be ſaved, he ſolaceth himſelfe in them, and as *Ezekiah*, *Eſay*, 38. 3. if wee can appeale to God in witneſſe of our ſincerity, *Lord remember how I have lived, how I have ſerved thee in uprightneſſe.* Then ſhall wee finde the comfort of this will never be taken away from us, elſe if wee cannot thus appeale to God, we may call and cry to him, but he will give us but a comfortleſſe anſwere, goe to the gods which you have choſen, let the world helpe you, let pleaſures and riches deliver you, you would not chooſe

chooſe mee while I gave you all bleſſings of life and health, now goe yee curſed.

FINIS.